



Individual Investigation of the Truth

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Introduction to Text

As this text was being created, I shared it with individuals to get initial feedback and reaction to the information being presented. Repeatedly, I received a response of inquiry about what motivated, or made me decide to put together something like this and what I hoped to accomplish with its manifestation. The depth of my response varied depending on the degree of understanding and optimism of the individual and the relationship I had with them, but was never fully answered because I did not really know myself. Now as I sit at the computer for what I hope is one of the last times for this project, I have a better idea of what I am hoping to accomplish and get started with this project. I am an individual who understands the effects of the denial of human rights and basic resources on an individual's physical and spiritual development. I have personally experienced discrimination, but I also have been given the opportunities of the privileged. This gives me a unique perspective to look at our society and existences. Regardless of perspective, there comes a time when a conscious individual realizes and addresses that there has to be some fundamental changes to the way they individually, and we collectively, exist and the way our society has been operating. If an individual believes and understands that we as human beings are spiritual beings, having physical experiences, and that this existence is primarily about attaining spiritual attributes, to be utilized in the next existence. Then there is no excuse for us collectively to continue to allow our fellow creations to suffer or be without the basic necessities and rights all creations in the Divine System and of the Creator are entitled to.

The text was approached with the intent of presenting the major belief systems of the world in an objective, historical, academic form in which an individual could survey, compare, and deduce their own conclusions. I realize now at completion, that there is a tone in the presentation that is influenced by my personal realizations and choice of existence. I have an expectation that most individuals should come to the/ir Truth at some time, and live in accord with It, and be devoted to creating an environment so others too can come to the/ir Truth and have an outlet for their desires. I do not want that tone of expectation to affect the way the undeniable Truth, that is presented in this text, is received by the reader. The Truth is, and when an individual investigates It objectively, their overall conclusion is going to be similar to all others who have

perceived and understood The Truth. My personal apprehension and experience of The Truth had an intensity to a degree that made continuing to see my fellow creations suffer, and seeing people missing the entire point of existence no longer acceptable. That energy of intolerance of injustice and incongruence manifest into this text, and inevitably effects its tone. The tone does not affect The Truth. All information presented in this text being referenced from a text or scripture from the various belief systems, is being referenced from the teachings within the belief systems themselves. This is the information each belief system teaches about itself. Even with this being the case, the seeker should investigate, and have the information verified by whatever reference or source the seeker requires or desires, whether it be by way of their own apprehension and recognition of Truth, or their chosen institutions officials. The foundational information of the belief systems in the text stands as Truth and is basically undeniable. I restate, the foundational teachings and general information regarding the manifestation of the belief system is basically undeniable from whatever perspective an individual may choose to investigate or look at it. Whether it be from a historic, religious or scientific perspective.

Scientific is the classification given to something once humankind has recognized and discovered how it exists and operates. Yet humankind and science realize the occurrence existed before their discovery and realization. Science is humankind's set of realizations and explanations, but the entire set of occurrences and possibilities exists regardless of our realization and understanding. Inability to scientifically prove the occurrence of something has created separation between science and religion, when in actuality they are of a complementary nature. If what is previously stated is true, then my desire for this project will begin immediately. Those desires being the beginning of the implementation of whatever Change is necessary to create a unified peaceful world, in which individuals are able, encouraged, and nurtured to live an existence in which the attainment of spiritual attributes, spiritual progression, and ascension are the focal points and purpose of all individuals lives. When an individual truly reflects on their personal existence and collective existence in whole, a realization exists that the essence of happiness and fulfillment lies with occurrences of a non-tangible nature, like relationships, and not in any thing of a physical, material nature. When an individual begins to investigate the Revelations of the Creator within the realms of Creation, begins to live in accord with the Divine Outline, and begins to feel the energy of inclusion and connection to the Divine System, an individual begins to only be able to see the world in a certain manner, and their existence becomes devoted to manifestation of the

envisioned existence. An existence with the realization that as creations of the Creator we are interconnected and interdependent, and that in order for one of us to be truly at peace, we all must be able to be at peace. This is the point where knowers of Truth are, seekers are approaching, and those who have not yet realized must be. Realization is the beginning, but action and implementation must follow for Change to manifest. Those who truly know The Truth must lead and mobilize the efforts and energies of all who are seeking, and those who recognize Truth and desire Change, and this must begin Now.

In attempting to answer when and why this endeavor came to be, I guess I would have to put its derivation point around the end of my college experience. The last summer I was in school, I took a philosophy of religion class. I remember how tripped out I was, sitting in that classroom listening to these kids argue against the existence of a Creator, or God. I remember looking out the window in the classroom and thinking about some of blatant proofs within nature that clearly refuted everything coming out of these people's mouths. I'll never forget the day of class when we were speaking on the Design Theory, a theory that states that if something appears to have a design or systematic operations, compared to random occurrences, then there is an inference of a Designer. To have to call to these peoples attention to obvious examples such as photosynthesis and its relation to our existence and the human body as example of some of the design right in front of their eyes was quite an experience and realization point. I realized the established institutions and systems of our society were not conducive to what I considered a good and right existence and that in actuality, they almost prohibit individuals from being able to live in accord with the Divine outline. After being thoroughly exposed to, educated on, and prepared to be included in the established systems and isms within our society, I realized I did not want to be apart of it in any way, if possible. So I left Chapel Hill, North Carolina in the summer of 2000 bound for New York City, with less than one hundred dollars in my pocket, and less than a semester left to complete in order to receive my degree. I studied sociology in college and I had an intense interest in observing, interacting, and understanding people and society. I knew that there was no better sociological observatory than the economic and cultural mecca of the earth. So, I began teaching tennis at a club downtown with hopes of going over to Europe to play for a club in the spring of the next year. With the aid of my family, I got a place in Harlem and I began living my existence.

Even with all of my so-called realizations and desires to stay out of the vacuum cycle of doing something just to survive and working to maintain, I got sucked into "the system" in February of 2001 when I accepted a job in marketing. My experiences working in an environment such as that continued my observations and acquisition of information on human behavior and our collective existence. During this time is when I would say the preparatory beginnings for this endeavor physically occurred. I had been a seeker since the end of my college experience, but I had not been able to find outside verification on some ideas I had about how this existence worked and how it was intended to be experienced. At the same time as I was dragging myself out of bed to commute to work from Brooklyn everyday on the iron worm, I met a woman who introduced me to the writings of Bahauallah and the Bahai Faith. As a Virgo and being a scrutinizing individual of all things presented to me anyway, I went into my investigation of the teachings of Bahauallah skeptical.

I grew up in a home with a mother who truly lived in accord with the teachings of Jesus, with unconditional love for all as its foundation, and a father who was definitely a believer. I was always a believer in the Creator, but when I began to have my own thoughts on things, there were just a few aspects of the teachings I received about Christianity that did not logically make sense to me. Specifically, the exclusionary belief that anyone who did not believe in Jesus as the son of God was not going to ascend the way they would if they did believe in Jesus, even if they were never introduced to the idea and being of Jesus. Another was the idea that the almighty Creator came down to Its own creation in the form of a man to guide humankind, and the Creators own creation destroyed It, or even the Creators only begotten son. The limitations placed on the Creator by these scenarios were difficult for me to comprehend. These thoughts were aside from the obvious contradiction institutionalized religious systems have been throughout history. The fact that the writings of Bahauallah were written or dictated by Bahauallah himself and preserved to a degree where I myself could go and see them today was meaningful to me. The fact that the events recounted about the life and experiences of this individual and the people around him occurred only one hundred and fifty or so years ago and can be verified by outside third party historical means was convincing as well. Those two aspects of the teachings gave it initial credence, but once I began to read the writings, my soul recognized that this was a source of Truth, and all skepticism ceased. The writings are a vast, in-depth, and intense presentation of The Truth. My personal experience was quite intense when I began to read about all the ideas and situations I had thoughts and conceptions about myself, but previously had nowhere to

find the answers or get verification of the accuracy of my thoughts. The writings of Bahauallah cover a diverse range of topics, and includes commentary and answers to questions and situations that remained unaddressed in the other Messages from the Creator. Personally, being introduced to the teachings of Bahauallah changed my existence. I speak highly of my experience with finding the message that resonated with me deeply, but I realize that nothing that is stated in this text by any of these individuals means anything to someone who does not believe the Messengers are who and what they say they are. If someone does not believe these individuals to be Messenger from the Creator with a Divine Message, then nothing stated by them as Truths can be accepted as such. This belief is something all individuals must come to themselves, and necessary for an individual to investigate and find the/ir Truth and integrate it into the/ir existence.

So, there I was in the daily grind, reading the writings of Bahauallah and other Messengers, consciously trying to incorporate the information into my existence, and continuing to seek out and enjoy as much of New York as I could. Then, on the morning of September 11th, 2001 things changed. I will always have the memories of being on my way to work on the Q train traveling over the Manhattan Bridge, and seeing smoke bellowing from the back of one of the Twin Towers. After the events of that day, there were a few dominant thoughts on my mind, primarily thoughts based on the idea of relevancy. What was the relevancy or impact of what I was doing? I had already recognized way back in college that this existence, or at least mine, was not about the attainment of physical things and comfort, and it is not just about me either. Having desires of making money just to provide for myself and my family, and just being concerned with only the people close to me was not a fulfilling existence to me. I knew that if I had conceptions of something greater to do, then I had a responsibility of manifestation of said ideas or at least an attempt at it. I always thought that if individuals just knew. If they just knew that this existence is not about anything physical. If they knew that if they hinged their happiness on material things that could be there one moment and gone the next, then they will never be in control of their own well-being. If they realized that no one can feel true peace until all individuals are able to experience peace as well. If they would just realize that we all are basically the same and desire the same things, and that a society built on cooperation instead of competition is necessary for all of us to satiate these desires. It seemed as though those kinds of thoughts were being experienced by a good number of people at the time.

As I previously stated, I was working in marketing and advertising and after the events, the industry was basically stagnant. My unscrupulous employers had reduced my salary, and I had just been enlightened to one of the better aspects of our hijacked socio-political system, unemployment insurance. On the very morning I was going to ask my employer to lay me off, they called me in the office to do that very thing. That occurrence was the initial catalyst for the manifestation of this project. Although for weeks after being able to stay at home and have the means for survival and having the ideas about relevancy, I still did not have any specific ideas, conceptions, or desires to partake in this endeavor. I knew that the information I had been personally taking in was good information and knowing it had improved my existence. I knew that this information was quite pertinent due to the recent occurrences in our world. I also knew that when I had conversations with seekers, that this type of information was interesting to them and on their minds and in their thoughts. And one day it occurred, or more accurately came to me, that this basic information needed to be put together in one place that could be easily referenced.

In late October of 2001, I began compiling the basic background historical information on each of the faith systems presented in the text in academic outline note form. I continued by finding the pertinent and generally accepted personal histories of the Messengers, where that information existed. I never considered myself a writer before this period, I did not really consider myself a writer during the period, I considered myself doing something that I was compelled to do and felt needed to be done. I just thought this information needed to be put together, and I found myself infused with an energy that kept me up every night from around midnight to five in the morning for months that seemed to guide me towards and put the right information in front of me. I apologize for the hastiness of the compiling of the information, but the information is nothing new. I felt as though we simply needed the compiling of the original Messages from the Creator in order to realign our existences with the Truth. The text is just a foundational reminder in which to build and start the personal, social, economic, and political movements of Change, which is the purpose of this project. I do not expect anyone to take what I say or even what I have compiled as the absolute truth. I desire and entreat all individuals to go investigate themselves and follow the original teachings of whichever Message resonates and feels right to them. When an individual finds and understands the/ir Truth, living in an unjust society becomes unacceptable and constant strides towards the betterment of our unitary collective existence becomes ones desire, consciousness and existence.

As I read and took in information, the knowledge I thought was relevant and necessary, I wrote down. Around the middle of the process, I went back to Chapel Hill to consult with a few of the professors in the religious studies department, in order to verify the basic information I had begun to compile was congruent with what was generally accepted in the realms of academia and religious speculation, and it was then that I began to realize the impact of the compilation of this information and the actions that could occur if people just took a little time to investigate for themselves what this life is suppose to be about. I challenge anyone who has done investigation for themselves to refute the statement that the way we are collectively existing today is not the way we are suppose to be existing. I do not believe there are too many people who would refute that statement. With this being the case, there is no reason Change can and will not begin immediately.

With newfound encouragement and drive, sincere appreciation and gratitude Dr. Ariel, I returned to New York, moved from Crown Heights Brooklyn with my roommate Joe Fava, who supported and aided in this manifestation from day one all the way through, to a penthouse on Park Avenue in Manhattan. I mention the particulars of my situation to indicate that this information was recognized and compiled by an individual who has experienced a wide range of situations, and whose mind was on experiencing all life had to offer, not some unknowing, unrealistic, reclusive religionist, who does not know what is really going on and the many different things life can be about. I have lived in several geographic areas and fellowshipped with members of the world community from all over. I've been on both sides of the haves and the have-nots. I've experienced a few nights of sleeping on the couch in the lobby of the tennis club because I had no place to go, a lot of nights on couches of friends, countless early morning sessions watching the sun come up in Brooklyn, some real good nights on the penthouse roof enjoying my friends, and more nights in the streets of the city than I would like to admit to. All of these physical material experiences were in actuality the spiritual experiences which have brought me to this point, to be able to compile this information and speak about The Existence realistically from a perspective most individuals can relate to, because I can relate to their situation. There is absolutely nothing wrong with enjoying everything this existence has to offer, there are just a few things we collectively have to agree upon so that all individuals are given the opportunity to experience the things in this existence they desire and have a right to. During most of these situations I had little or no money, but I always had the support of my family, sincerely good friends, and the peace

and joy of knowing that I was a part of this magnificent Divine System and existence.

While I'm speaking on support, I would like to take a moment to thank some people, whom without their existence and support, this endeavor would have never come to manifestation. My family, I know you guys may not quite get what we are trying to do, but I know that without your presence and support I would not have been able to accomplish this and a majority of the things I have been able to in my life, and I thank you for your support throughout this as well. I would also like to thank the Fava and the Rath families for your son's steadfast friendship and to you for opening your homes and selves to me and my situation. I would also like to thank the beautiful soul who inspired my soul to be open to receiving the Divine Teachings in this way. My good friend Jason Hardi, I appreciate you opening your home, enjoy the shirt. Berkley Priest, whose friendship I sincerely appreciate, as your abilities which made this possible. Ms. Moss, thank you for all of your support, and keeping shaping minds and our future. To all of my friends who have supported me in the many ways in which it was required for this endeavor to manifest, I thank you to the deepest degree of the sentiment. And finally to all the people that I have had the pleasure of meeting who have aided in the shaping of me and my consciousness, I thank you, for without other individuals, we have no way of defining ourselves.

I was still on unemployment when I moved back to Manhattan, which goes to show that when you believe you are doing what you are suppose to do and it is, things will work out. As detachment from all material things and all vain imaginings and thoughts became my goal of mindset, I was given the opportunity to experience all that I had just detached from. All things created and existent in this world exist for our experiences and enjoyment. It is when excess and attachment occur that these material creations and desires become not positive. So, there I was living in a penthouse in the city, continuing to try and finish the writing, and experiencing what most people would think would be a wonderful situation. And it was, but not because I was in a particular apartment on a particular street. The enjoyment was derived from being able to be doing what I truly desired to be doing, and from my ability to be able to host and enjoy my friends comfortably. The satiation of these two desires is basically what all people desire for themselves. As creations, we all have basic requirements and desires that we need satiated to be at peace. These basic things such as the ability to be able to provide for yourself and your people, a sense of belonging and purpose, and some space for yourself are the bare basic requirements we as humans need to be able to begin

reaching are intended station. As much as I enjoyed living how we were, I knew that I was not going to sacrifice myself by plugging back into the system just to pay the exorbitant rent and survive. So, I decided to leave the city. I felt as though I was given a beautiful blessing to experience all that I had in my couple of years in the mix, but I was ready to experience something new. I had realized a while ago that is very difficult to live in New York and be detached, and that the occupations where an individual can be of service to their fellow creations did not compensate very well financially. I was not going to utilize my energies for something I did not believe in. So, I left New York, did a little traveling, went back down south to slow down and finish this endeavor, and now as I complete these final thoughts I find myself right back where it began. But now I see much more clearly what the point of this project is and what effects can occur from it.

The text itself is calling for individuals to live a personal existence that would ultimately create a positive communal existence. This is definitely what I would desire, but for those who have already recognized the Truth and are already living the right existence, I am asking you to join us in creating an environment where being conscious, aware and considerate are valued, appreciated and rewarded. I realize that the established systems do not easily allow for individuals to spend their time doing the good they desire to do. And I realize most energies have to be expended towards producing means for you and your families survival. But I ask you to stop, investigate and realize that if we collectively know that there is a better way in which to exist, and no one but us collectively can manifest and put into place these right systems, than this is something that is waiting on us. A few examples of the kinds of Change we are demanding include and somewhat begin with the necessity to elect the individuals from our society of the highest intellect, virtue, and honor as our representatives and leaders. Our representatives should be the exemplars of the right consciousness and existence. They should have a history of service and selflessness. The position of political representative is one of great importance and should be held by individuals of high moral standard. They should represent and champion the desires and aspirations of the individuals they are representing. These individuals along with other individuals of influence, visibility and stature from our society must also live and champion the cause of living the right existence, in order to set the standard of making being conscious and aware the popular, right, only thing to be. There also needs to be a better mobilization of all of the people's energies and organizations, which desire to do good and bring Change. There are a lot of individuals and organizations that desire and

are set up to be of service and do good, and they do a lot of good. Unfortunately, having thousands of organizations trying to individually take care of hundreds of situations seems to dilute the effectiveness of the collective efforts of these organizations in terms of their overall effect on society. It seems as though unifying or mobilizing all of these efforts towards one common goal, which when reached, all other situations and problems will be taken care of, would be a better tactic. With a just, conscious society, all societal ills would be eliminated. This just society has to begin with a collective realization that we must improve the relationship, dynamic, and our conceptions regarding the male female relationship. We will not progress until we realize that we are interdependent and the attributes of the other sex are the complimentary attributes to our own, and that only when put together, can the entire human experience be conceived.

Some of the other immediate primary concerns would be, corporate accountability, the re-establishment of a government by and for the people and improved transparency of operations of the government and the corporations we support through consumerism. We as voters and consumers must demand that they abide by whatever standards we set, because we support them. We must begin to only support companies which support us, our interest, and our communities. There needs to be a new era of conscious corporations, which have facilities and bring employment to the areas in which their products are supported. The system of capitalism in its essence is not negative, but the separating of the creator from its creation and the executives of the corporations receiving a majority of the profits from other people's efforts is, and this must change. Another principle Change that must be implemented immediately is the creation of a system of accountability of our political representatives. Systems need to be put in place where constituents are notified or at least have a way of finding out how their elected representative is voting on the issues that effect their life. At this point in time, we have no easily accessible way of knowing if our representatives are truly representing our interests. In this age of computers and digital communication, there is no reason there is not a broadcast report, newspaper, website, television network, or some type of streamlined notification system in place where a conscious individual can check on how their representative is representing them. The last suggestion I will present here for the betterment of our society is our collective use of the process of consultation when attempting to address or remedy situations that affect us collectively. Consultation between the best minds and individuals of the highest virtue and honor seems necessary in the manifestation of the best solutions or ideas to better

our collective existence. These are just a few personal observations and suggestions of how we can begin this betterment process. The solutions will truly begin to be manifest when collectively we put our minds and souls together to better our collective existence.

At the current time, I still refuse to use the attributes manifest to me by the Creator for anything I do not believe in and that I believe is good.

The state of the world is especially uneasy with the recent occurrences. I know a different day is coming. I know that some of the events that have recently occurred or occurring now are either going to be the end of the past day, or the beginning of the new day. I know there are a lot of other individuals who have recognized the Truth and realized that what we have created and experiencing is not congruent with it. This endeavor is just one individual's initial effort at bringing about Change to the way we collectively exist. I felt that if individuals had no points of contention on the subject of the unitary, complementary nature of religion, our essential oneness, and the general outline of existence, then some change could begin to occur. Collectively we have created this system, and it is going to have to be collectively we change it. It is going to require all individuals who have recognized the Truth to integrate it into their existence and call upon and demand others to be in accord with it as well. This call is especially going out to the individuals in our society of influence. These individuals must accept the responsibility of not just living a right existence, but championing the cause for all to live in accord with the Divine outline. I personally am willing to accept these responsibilities, welcome and unite with all others who accept them as well, and will be calling upon other individuals to step up, recognize the Truth, and join us in The Change.

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

The purpose of this compilation of information is to present the major world faiths, or belief systems, as different stages in the eternal history and constant evolution of one Religion, itself Divine and indivisible and deriving from one source, the Creator. This is attained by the objective presentation of the original messages and biographical information surrounding the creation of each faith system. The importance of the emphasis on the oneness of the revealed messages and humanity itself is that from this one common accepted Truth, humanity can then begin to do the things necessary to create a peaceful and unified world in which individuals are able exist in the manner in which we were created and intended to exist. This one religion of the Creator would be better described as simply, The Truth. This Truth has been revealed to humanity through revealers or Messengers throughout mankind's unknown and recorded history. Revelation to humanity is both recurrent and progressive, as each Messenger brought divine teachings appropriate to the spiritual and intellectual capacity of the people of that day. Unfortunately, over time every faith or system that has developed from a revelation and teachings of a Messenger has declined. These declines have been due to several reasons. Primarily, religionist blindly following traditions rather than the pure teachings of the Messenger. Individuals manipulating and abusing their position, power and knowledge. People basing their belief on imitation and ritual rather than exercising individual investigation for themselves, and a host of other reasons.

Religious truth is relative to its recipients and is not absolute. The Messengers declared eternal verities, moral and spiritual Truths renewed by each Revelation, but their message also changed to reflect the particular spiritual evolution and capacity of human society at their time of appearance. Each of these Messengers have proclaimed the same Truths about Creation and the Creator. Their aims and foundational principles are essentially the same in nature. Their sacred books are correlative in nature, and most have left prophetic witness of the future coming of another revealer of word and will of the Creator. The concept of looking at the entire panorama of Revelation to humanity through Messengers is called Progressive Revelation.

According to the Truth, obedience to divine law is the source and path to human progress, happiness, and civilization. The Divine Messengers were sent to promote knowledge of The Creator, the Divine System, unity, and fellowship amongst human beings. True religion, or knowledge of the Creator and the Divine System, consists of divine teachings which lead humankind to the refinement of character, higher thoughts, and a higher level of existence. Religion is not a mere set of beliefs, customs, rituals, traditions, ceremonies, or obligations. It is a consciousness and existence one must strive to possess at all times. Its purpose is to bring fellowship, love, unity, eternal life, and moral excellence to people. To make people joyful, educated, free from prejudice, and to establish peace on earth. The teachings of the Messengers are the chief means for social order. They are intended for the remedy of human problems and ailments, not the cause. The Divine faiths are all based on one reality and therefore are like branches from the same tree, or complimentary rays from the one sun. The reason they may have seemed to differ from one another is due to the varying requirements of the age in which they appeared and the particular message each was intended to bring to humanity.

To begin this survey, it seems appropriate and beneficial to begin with stating a few of the major foundational Truths of this existence, as revealed by the Messengers:

Nature is subject to an absolute organization, to determined laws, to a complete order and a finished design. Nature itself has no intelligence, will, or perception. The nature of fire is to burn, the nature of water is fluidity and it flows without will, perception, nor intelligence. The nature of the sun is radiance, and it radiates without discrimination, as vapor's nature determines it to ascend. These few examples make it clear that natural movements of all things are compelled by something, to do something. In nature there are no voluntary movements, except those by animals and human beings. This ability to resist or oppose the call of nature to do something is accomplished through the use of intelligence. Intelligence being defined as the discovery of or attainment of the knowledge of the constitution of things. Through these discoveries or attainment of knowledge, man has the ability to command or live somewhat outside the forces of nature. All great discoveries and inventions were due to man discovering the constitution of something. Gravity would be a prime example for man's ability to control nature once he learns the constitution of it. Even with intelligence and will, man still is subjected to nature and its forces. This subjection would be in the form of death, sleep, sickness, and other conditions. These subjections would indicate or imply

the existence of some type of subjector or governor because we are governed by these subjections. We are contingent beings with dependency, and that dependency is an essential necessity to our existence and for our ascension. This dependency also implies an independent entity whose independence is also essential to this existence.*

There are four distinct kingdoms of physical creation; mineral, vegetable, animal, and the human kingdom. And five divisions of spirit; vegetative, animal, human, heavenly, and the Holy Spirit. Each level of the physical existence encompasses the qualities of the ones below it, as well as possessing its own particular characteristics which are beyond the attainment of the lower kingdoms. The mineral possess the power of cohesion and is held together by atomic attraction. The vegetable kingdom adds the power of growth to cohesion. The animal kingdom is distinguished from the lower two by the possession of sense perception and the power of movement. The human kingdom is distinguished from the other kingdoms by our power of ideation, conscious reflection, and discovery, which manifests into science and invention. The human kingdom is also distinguished by our souls continuation after physical death and our ability to recognize and love the Divine and Its Creation.**

Human beings possess and are characterized by two different aspects of our soul, the rational, intellectual aspect of the soul and the spiritual or divine aspect of the soul. The spiritual reflects the divine light of the Creator, while the rational utilizes the powers and aspects of the rational faculty, the mind. Rational or intellectual expressions of the soul would include imagination, conceptualization, reflection, comprehension, and memory. Love, compassion, and service are expressions of the divine aspect of the soul.*

The soul is a spiritual reality that has no physical existence. It cannot be observed or understood through scientific or any other material means. Its essence and reality are beyond the understanding and comprehension of man. The human soul is a divinely ordained subtle mystery of the spiritual realm. Even though we cannot fully comprehend our own essence, we can observe its powers and witness the expression of its attributes within ourselves and others. It is through the Divine Messengers that mankind primarily gets its conceptions of spiritual realities. The soul is to the body like light is to a mirror. The light is not in the mirror, yet is reflected from it. The mirror breaks, but the light remains unaffected and reflecting. In this existence, the soul is expressed through the physical body. Yet, like the reflected light in the mirror, the soul is not regulated by the contingencies of the physical body.*

When the divine scriptures and texts speak of the return of someone, they are not speaking literally of the actual return of that or any specific individual. The reference is to the return of the realization of a set of attributes and perfections exactly realized in one individual that were realized in the same manner as the previous individual being referred to. It is not the essence or exact being returning, but the return of the realization of attributes and qualities, as the qualities and perfections in Elias were realized in John the Baptist, and The Bab.

A practical example of this concept would be that of a flower, or more specifically the seed that produces that flower. When a new season arrives and the flower comes to be, it could be said that the flower is the flower of last season. Although it could also be said that it is an altogether new flower. Both statements would be correct, but to synthesis the two into an absolute truth, apply the thought mentioned previously. The flower of last year contained the attributes, literally the seed, of this years flower, next years flower, and all subsequent flowers to come, yet when the new seasons' flower arrives, the flower or attributes displayed in the flower, are indeed new to that point of time in existence.*

The idea of the seed is one that can be used to explain some of the more perplexing ideas and questions about this existence, like the idea of free will, predestination, and fate. The traditional points of views claimed that if humans were predestined to do something, then their degree of free will was non-existent or minimal at best. Yet, as the example with the flower and the seed clearly exhibit, the past, present, and future can be contained in a single situation at a single point in time, without the outcome being determined or revealed. Consider the human existence as a seed of an apple tree. From that initial seed comes the trunk, branches, leaves, and fruit. From the fruit comes another seed, which contains another tree and all of its components, and another, and so on. Now as we can see, the initial seed actually possesses a tree and all its components, as well as every other subsequent trees attributes and eventual characteristics and being. These attributes and components have not been realized or come into being as of yet, nevertheless they do exist within the initial seed. Now, to reconnect that principle to our original subject. As a human being, our attributes, capacities, and abilities are in place from the beginning, and the manifestation of said attributes and abilities depend on the degree of nourishment we receive, in other words, the amount of exposure to the sun of divine knowledge and truth that we receive. Literally, love, education, support, exposure, and being taught spiritual principles and truths, to name a few. These nourishments are existent in the world as is, but the responsibility to provide this nourishment lies

directly on the physical parents. If the physical parents fail to provide this nourishment, as previously stated, one can find and receive this nourishment and knowledge by opening themselves up to observing and recognizing the divine systems in place in the world, or opening themselves up to the teachings of the Divine Messengers and their instructions for good living. With the proper nourishment and exposure, individuals are able to find their place in this existence, and find and fulfill their purpose for their life.

"Know thou that every soul is fashioned after the nature of God, each being pure and holy at his birth. Afterwards, however, the individuals will vary according to what they acquire of virtues or vices in this world. Although all existent beings are in their very nature created in ranks or degrees, for capacities are various, nevertheless every individual is born holy and pure, and only thereafter may he become defiled."

Baha'ullah

* Some Answered Questions

**Encyclopedia of the Bahai Faith

ADAM AND THE BEGINNING

Both science and religion have the being known as Adam being preceded by others in a preliterate world, or during a time period from which we have no hard evidences, records or histories. For the purposes of this compilation and discussion, the being or notion of Adam is being used to represent the first manifestation of the Creator, or the first human being with the Divine rational soul, or basically the beginning point for this cycles recorded or known religious history. Adam is a Biblical and Quranic figure regarded as the progenitor of all humankind. The story of Adam and Eve is regarded as a symbolic divine revelation. All of humanity being descendants of Adam emphasizes all people's original derivation point, oneness, and the essential unitary nature of Creation. In the revelation, the character Adam symbolizes the divine spirit of the first physical being, and the character Eve represents the first physical being's rational soul. The serpent represents humanity's attachment to the physical material world. That attachment is characterized by the concepts of desire and suffering, which becomes the contemporary concept of sin. This story has been used to characterize the nature of all human beings, which is our nature to want, or desire something. Along with this desire comes its contingent counterpart, suffering. Inability to satiate a desire brings about suffering. The tree of knowledge represents the human world, which contains the concepts of good and evil, or contingency. In the revelation, attachment to the physical world and human condition is symbolized by the serpent as well, and this attachment is what keeps humanity in the restraints of the physical material world, and separated from the freedom of the Divine spiritual realm and existence.*

The concepts of good and evil correspond to and only have relevance in the physical world and in reference to the physical condition. The spiritual and divine world is purely and wholly good, therefore only after the spiritual action or energy has manifested in the physical material world can it then be mistakenly considered or classified as good or bad. Contemporary society has failed to realize that the concepts of good and evil are simply two sides of the same action or energy. A situation can only

be considered bad, if considered as such by the individual it affects. The spiritual realm is absolutely contrary to the material physical world, which is based on contingency, light and dark, good and evil, near and far, things exist as opposite conditions. In the spiritual realms, there is no label or conception of an action or energy being good or bad, positive or negative. All actions and situations are seen as occurrences. The occurrence simply requires an individual to recognize the situation, and act accordingly. The first recognition is that the situation has a spiritual derivation point, therefore the situation is of a spiritual nature, therefore occurring for a reason, no matter how it may have manifested in the physical world. All actions or occurrences have a purpose, and that purpose is to experience something and acquire some spiritual enlightenment or attribute, which at its basic, is why we existence the way we do in this existence.

*Concepts taken from Some Answered Questions

KABBALAH

The idea and teachings of Kabbalah, which means inherited tradition, predates any faith or belief system in our discussion. According to Kabbalistic teachings, the universe operates according to certain supremely powerful principles. By learning to understand and act in accordance with these precepts, individuals will be able to improve their existences, and ultimately achieve true fulfillment for themselves and all humanity. According to Kabbalah, there is a specific energy in the universe each week that we can tap into to help us recognize and create situations within our existence. The Zohar, the sacred text of Kabbalah, reveals what this energy is by decoding the stories in the Torah to reveal their spiritual message.

In a similar manner as basic physical laws of nature such as gravity and magnetism exist independently of our will and awareness, the spiritual laws of the universe influence our lives at all times independently of our individual will, awareness, and even desire. Kabbalah empowers an individual with understanding of how to live in accord with these energies and laws, and to use them for the benefit of themselves and the world. Kabbalah is a precise description of the interwoven nature of the spiritual and physical reality. It is a full complement of powerful, practical methods for attaining goals within these realities. Simply put, Kabbalah provides tools in order for an individual to achieve happiness, fulfillment, and to bring the Light and power of the Creator into their existence. For millennia's, Kabbalah was suppressed by those who did not understand it, the ancient Kabbalistic sages chose to keep the knowledge hidden. These ancient Kabbalists thought that the time had not arrived yet for all to have access to the teachings. Throughout this long era of repression, Kabbalists have always hoped that a very different time was coming, a time in which the world would at last be prepared to receive the teachings of Kabbalah, and free to do so as well. A crucial milestone in that new era was reached in 1922 AD/ 5661 FTB, when The Kabbalah Centre was established in Jerusalem by individual by the name of Rabbi Ashlag. Some notable individuals who studied the teachings of Kabbalah include; Plato, Pythagoras, Newton, Aristotle, Jung, Shakespeare, Freud, and of course Abraham and Moses.

Kabbalah is generally described as having three aspects of the teachings. The first aspect being theoretical, which focuses upon the

dynamics of the spiritual realm, the worlds of Sefirot, souls, and angels. The second aspect of Kabbalah would be meditative. The meditative aspect makes use of divine names, letter permutations, and methods to attain higher states of consciousness. It also is comprised of a kind of yoga, or transcendent existence. Meditation, mantra, chanting, yoga or any technique an individual may use, are tools to divorce the mind from the concrete, physical existence, to a more abstract mode of perception, thought, and concentration that goes beyond normal consciousness. The third aspect of Kabbalah could be classified as magical, although closely related to meditative. This aspect consists of various signs, incantations, and divine names, through which one can influence or alter natural events and occurrences. Many of these techniques closely resemble meditative methods, and their success may depend on the ability to induce mental states where telekinetic or spiritual power can effectively be channeled. In order to focus and exercise spiritual and mental energies and powers, one must be aware of and take into account the time and astrological environment in which they are existing.

Kabbalah teaches that long before creation, the Light of the Creator filled the entire cosmos, filled it beyond our conception of time and space, for it is the essential nature of the Light to expand in every direction, and to endlessly share of itself. In order to express its giving essence, the Light created a Vessel whose nature was to receive. The Vessel was created not only for the Light, but of the Light, in the same way that a pitcher made of ice is formed from the same water that pours into it. Yet, in this case there was something entirely new about the Vessel, which was its nature to receive rather than to give and share. Once the primordial Vessel came into being, there existed a pure circularity, a condition of complete mutual fulfillment between the giving, sharing principle of the Light and the receiving, accepting principle of the Vessel. The Light found completion by giving endlessly of its beneficence, and the Vessel experienced total satisfaction at receiving endlessly of the Light's infinite goodness. Then something changed. The Vessel was no longer satisfied with just receiving. Kabbalah refers to this new negative intention, this resistance, as bread of shame. Bread of shame meant that the Vessel would no longer simply receive the unearned benevolence of the Light. Rather, the Vessel had taken on the giving intention of the Light. The Vessel's desire to actively give rather than passively receive caused the Light to withdraw, to create a space in which the Vessel's new intention could express itself. The Light, whose only desire was to share, saw fit to withdraw its illumination so that the Vessel's desire could manifest. It is at this point that the metaphysics of Kabbalah intersects with the conclusions of modern science. Today, physicists refer to the creation of the Universe

as the Big Bang. But thousands of years ago, the ancient Kabbalists were already describing that same creation as the shattering of the Vessel. Into the space created by the withdrawal of the Light, the Vessel fragmented into an infinite number of entities and energies, all of which are endowed at their deepest level with desire, and not just desire to receive, but desire to receive for the purpose of sharing.

According to Kabbalah, the Light and the Vessel are the literal form and substance of the world we live in, not just the world, but even the physical bodies in which our souls now reside. The primordial (initial) sequence, desire to receive for the self alone, followed by bread of shame and resistance, followed by shattering and reconstituting as desire to receive for the purpose of sharing, is played out not only over the whole course of our lives, but in every action and every encounter. We are our finite selves, and we are also the infinite Light of the Creator. A phrase that occurs many times in both Hebrew prayers and in the Bible expresses this same truth. *"He and His name are one. He is the Light, and we are His name, extensions and expressions of Him."* After true understanding and ultimate simplification, one comes to the truth that at the most fundamental level there is no distinction between the Creator and Creation. Imagine that a mountain is the Infinite Light, or The Creator, and we are individual rocks presently separated from the Light. A rock or stone is only considered a rock or stone when it is separated from a mountain or foundation, its origin. Once it is has returned to its origin, it again regains its identity with its origin or the mountain itself. Understanding this means not just believing in the Creator, but identifying with It in a way that magnifies and humbles us at the same time. To assert that each of us can become like the Creator might seem the utmost audacity, but when the very essence of becoming like the Creator is to serve and give endlessly and to desire to receive for the purpose of sharing, this assertion is dismissed.

In the Kabbalistic teachings, The Light is sharing, and the essence of The Light is infinite intelligence and endless fulfillment. The receiving nature of the vessel is the polar opposite of the Light's sharing nature. Kabbalistic teaching explains that this disparity in nature created a spiritual separation between the Light and the vessel. The concepts of distance and nearness are based upon similarity of form and sameness of nature in the spiritual realm. In other words, the more two entities resemble one another, the closer they are to one another. The greater the degree of their dissimilarity, the greater the degree of separation.

There is a method according to Kabbalah whereby the vessel can remove the separation. Consider a pot of boiling water to be the Light and

an empty cup to be the vessel. When the boiling water is poured into the cup, the cup slowly becomes hot or takes on the attributes of the boiling water. Similarly, the vessel once created, absorbed certain attributes of the Light. In other words, the vessel possessed the characteristics of the Light, which is a desire to share. Sharing is the secret to eliminating the separation between the Light and the vessel. However, the vessel did not know how to share because its dominant intelligence is receiving. In order to put an end to the separation between the Light and the vessel, the vessel had to take an initial first step. The vessel stopped receiving. In response, the Light restricted itself and contracted, creating a single point within itself. The infinite gave birth to the finite. This was the first vacuum or void from which all matter formed, according to Kabbalah. According to the writings of sixteenth century Kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the universe was created out of nothingness from a single point of Light. The nothingness is called the Endless World. The Endless World was filled with infinite Light. The Light then restricted itself to a single point, creating primordial space. There is no information beyond this point. Therefore, the point is called "the beginning." After the contraction, the Endless World issued forth a ray of Light (energy). This ray of Light then expanded rapidly. All matter emanated from that point. This point (our universe) became the arena where the vessel could have the opportunity to transform its nature of receiving into one of sharing. This eventual transformation will generate a similarity of nature between Light and vessel, producing a reunification of the two. However, in this new union, the vessel possesses the ability to receive all the Light, but this time, for the purpose of sharing the Light.

The vessel is known in the Bible by the code word "Adam." The vessel had two opposing aspects, a positive electrical charge and a negative electrical charge, a male principle and a female principle, Adam and Eve. After the moment when the Light restricted itself and contracted, Kabbalists assert that the vessel broke into two pieces and the male principle separated from the female principle. These two pieces then shattered into an infinite number of pieces and became the protons, electrons, and other particles that make up the entire universe. Creation, according to Kabbalistic thinking, was the process by which energy transformed into physical form, or where atom became Adam.*

*Ideas taken from www.kabbalah.com
The Kabbalah Center, NYC

Physicists use mathematics in their attempts to solve nature's mysteries. Religionists use scripture to provide techniques for life within nature. The similarity between the two approaches is that they both attempt to explain the how of something. Religious systems attempt to give us guidelines for how to live, while science attempts to give us explanations for how things function and relate. It might be concluded that by combining the information from both fields, there would be an all-encompassing framework that addresses the interrelated function and purpose of all things, unfortunately that is not the case. Both science and religious systems stop short of being able to provide a seeker with all the answers they may seek.

From a Kabbalistic perspective, both science and religious systems are restricted within the world of effects, because they are locked into the question of how. In other words, asking how something occurs or works completely overlooks the intent behind the action and forces mere speculation in attempts to unravel an effect, rather than considering the cause, or the why of something. By addressing the question of why the seeker deals with the thought preceding the action.

Neither science nor religion is able to provide practical wisdom concerning matters of the heart and soul, nor emotions and feelings. This is because information is useless without the understanding of the why of something, because the effects mean nothing without understanding the cause. The how will never truly be realized without an attempt to figure out the why. Physicists are limited because studying relationships of physical matter is based on repetition of experiments in a laboratory, therefore an unexplainable occurrence, such as a miracle, cannot be proven or taken apart by scientific methods because the event cannot be contained in a lab or repeated. However, this does not mean miracles do not happen, it just means that physicists cannot provide an explanation for them because science has restricted itself to the physical realm, or the world of effects. Looking at the distinction between the outward appearance of physical matter and its essence is the core difference in approach between science and the ideas of Kabbalah. Science asks how something exists within the dimensions of time, space, motion, and causality. Kabbalistic thought asks why things exist at all. The two modes of thought, although coming from different starting points, often augment each other. The how will never prove the why, because the how deals with a system of mapping, while the why deals with actual experience, although they can work to complement each other.

Sefir Yetzirah

ABRAHAM

The individual of Abraham is generally associated with bringing the idea of monotheism to the people of his time. In actuality, the idea of one unitary entity or spirit permeating the universe actually predates Abraham, and competed with idol worship in a number of areas of the ancient world. An example of this would be during the times of the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaton. He came into intense conflict with the priestly caste when he abruptly declared numerous divinities null and void in favor of a single god of the sun. The Native American peoples also had a belief in a unifying spiritual power that emanated throughout nature. The Sioux tribes called this power Wakan. According to them, it was Wakan that made knives sharp, fires hot, and sunsets beautiful. It was their belief that there was a single positive energy that was everywhere, and it could manifest in an infinite number of forms at the same time. Abraham's teaching of the oneness of The Creator encompassed much more than the simple idea of monotheism, or one God. Abraham's concept stressed the interconnected, systematic and unitary nature of Creation and existence.

In the arena of academic religious speculation, Abraham is accredited as the first teacher of the teachings of Kabbalah and the author or compiler of the Sefir Yetzirah, The Book of Creation. In Mesopotamian and Egyptian sources, Abraham is referred to as Abiru, Apiru, and sometimes Habiru. Historically, Abraham was known to be born in Mesopotamia and to have lived in Egypt, and was believed to have spoken the western Semitic language of Hebrew. Abraham was also believed to have left the area of Ur and settled in Canaan. Some scholars believe Abraham to have been a wandering chieftain who led his people from Mesopotamia. According to the Bible in the Book of Genesis, Abraham was serving King Sodom as a mercenary. It also depicts Abraham as frequently coming into conflict with Canaan authorities. After his wife Sarah died, Abraham is reported to have bought land in Hebron and settled. History depicts two major waves of immigration or population increases associated with Abraham and his descendants. The first wave seemingly occurred around 1850 BC/1950 FTB, and depicts Abraham working in some capacity with Shem, the son of Noah. The second wave involved Abraham's grandson, Jacob, whose father was Isaac, later renamed Israel. History records Israel to have lived in the area of Shechem and Nablus, and he is associated and accredited with the Twelve Tribes of

Israel. Through his son Isaac, Abraham is considered the father of the Jewish people, and through Ishmael the father of Arabs. Abraham's attribution and teaching of the Sefir Yetzirah is speculatively dated around the nineteenth century BC or 1700 to 1900 years from the beginning of this cycle, which correlates to the revelation of other mystical traditions and subsequent texts such as the Vedic scriptures of Hinduism. Most evidences indicate the mystical tradition was further advanced in the Middle East than it was in India at the time.

The following is from the latest version of the Sefir Yetzirah, which is derived from Abraham's original compilation. This excerpt is indicative of the depth and nature of the information included in The Book of Creation and the Kabbalistic teachings. The information used for the deriving of these concepts and ideas date back over four thousand years.

There are seven cycles, each seven thousand years long. This means that the universe as we know it will last for 49,000 years...when counting the years of these cycles, one must not use an ordinary physical year, but rather a divine year. The Midrash (an ancient text) says that each divine day is a thousand years, basing this on the verse, "a thousand years in Your sight are but yesterday" (Psalms 90:4). Since each year contains 365 / days, a divine year would be 365,250 years long. According to this, each cycle of seven thousand divine years would consist of 2,556,750,000 earthly years. This figure of two-and-a-half billion years is close to the scientific estimate as to the length of time that life has existed on earth. If we assume that the seventh cycle began with the Biblical account of creation, then this would have occurred when the universe was 15,340,500,000 years old. This is very close to the scientific estimate that the expansion of the universe began some fifteen billion years ago.

The current Hebrew year is 5743. In this calendar, the year in which Adam was created is counted as year one. If we then count the Biblical genealogies from the time of Adam, we find 5742 years have elapsed since he was formed. However, the Kabbalists clearly say that other human beings existed before Adam, and this is even supported by scripture. Actually, there are two accounts of creation in the Book of Genesis. The first chapter of Genesis speaks of the initial creation of the universe, while the second chapter speaks of the creation of Adam. During the six days of creation described in the first chapter, God did not actual create the world, but rather, created the ingredients which would allow the world to develop. It thus refers to the creation of all matter, along with

space and time. It was during these six days that God brought the universe into being from absolute nothingness. After these six days of creation, God allowed the universe to develop by itself, renewing his creation each seven thousand divine years or 2.5 billion earthly years. All the laws of nature and properties of matter had been fixed for all time, as it is written, "He has established them forever, He has made a decree which shall not be transgressed" (Psalms 148:6). It is similarly written, "Whatever God decrees shall be forever, nothing shall be added to it, and nothing shall be taken away" (Ecclesiastes 3:14).

Each of the six cycles of creation brought something new into the world. The fifth cycle was the one that brought forth life, and this took place around two and half billion years ago. Around 974 generations before Adam, or some 25,000 years ago, man developed all the physical and mental capabilities that we possess today. This man had evolved from the "dust of the earth" (Genesis 2:7), but still lacked the divine soul that would make him a spiritual being. God then created Adam, the first true human being with a soul, "And He blew in his nostril a soul of life" (Genesis 2:7). According to tradition, the creation of Adam took place on Rosh Hashanah, the Hebrew New Year, which occurred on September 9, 3761 BC.

HINDUISM

"Whenever spirituality decays and materialism is rampant, then...I myself come forth. For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of evil-doers, and for establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age."

Bhagavad Gita IV 7,8

The early written works of the Hindu teachings are called Sanskrit, and appeared around the fifth century BC/ 3200 years FTB. They are descriptive analysis of the original teachings. The first organized system or school of thought was the Samkhya school of thought, and it has its origins around the ninth century BC/2700 years FTB. Within Hindu theology, the concept of the Creator is identified as Vishnu. According to Hindu tradition, when necessary, Vishnu incarnates into an individual on earth in order to bring divine revelation to humanity. Traditionally, Vishnu's most notable incarnation was Krishna. One of the fundamental texts of the Hindu teachings, the Bhagavad Gita, describes Krishna's nature as eight-fold, comprising; earth, water, fire, wind, ether, mind, intellect, and ego, which are categories later described in Samkhya literature. Hindu theology has three main concepts. Brahman, which is characterized as the holy power or power in sacrificial ritual, prayer, and human experience, and the power, which sustains everything, and the inner meaning of all existence. Brahman is *"what cannot be spoken in words, but that whereby words are spoken...what cannot be thought with mind, but that whereby the mind can think."* The second concept, Shiva, could be described as correlating to the ideas of good and evil. The last concept would be Vishnu, which as previously stated refers to the concept of the Creator, and It manifests Itself to humanity through incarnations, messengers or avatars.

Hindus sought ways to transcend the human condition. Around the eighth century BC/ 2800 FTB, sages began to address these issues in treatises called Aranyakas and Upanishads, which comprise the Vedanta, which is the end portion of the Veda, which is another text within the Hindu teachings. At the end of the fifth century BC/ 3200 FTB, approximately 200 of these writings had been composed. The Upanishads encouraged people to cultivate a sense of Brahman in all things. This

constant awareness was somewhat of a process of revelation for all people, since the revelation of the Creator is revealed in Its essence in Creation itself. Hindu thought also revolves around the idea of an eternal life energy within all individuals, and this one life energy within us all is essentially divine. This energy is Atman.

Within Hindu theology, the term Darsana is a Sanskrit term generally translated as philosophy or theology. This system of thought is expressed through a tradition of commentaries upon fundamental texts. The Darsanas are analysis of or within the field of Vedic knowledge, pertaining to logic. The Darsana's are exegetical, using explanation and interpretation, in nature. They are expressed primarily in commentaries and sub-commentaries on revelation, the Upanishads, and on primary texts called Sutras. The Sutras form the scriptural source of the philosophical and theological schools within the Hindu teachings.

Of particular importance to Hindu thought are the Vedic speculations about the nature of language, which predate any other Hindu theme or schools of thought. The importance of this fact is due to the relationship Hinduism has with the teachings of Kabbalah. The Hebrew language, as well as its derivation, Aramaic, both stress the potency and power of language and sound and the spiritual power contained within the word combinations and incantations created by combining letters. As previously stated, the traditions of Kabbalah and Hinduism apparently were developing approximately around the same time in two different areas of the earth, yet share similar foundational beliefs and principles.

One of the earliest texts in Hinduism is the Rg Veda. It contains highly metaphysical speculation on the beginnings of existence. The hymn asks a series of complex questions pertaining to the origins of things, and particularly whether in the beginning there was existence (sat) and non-existence (asat). The hymns display a remarkable sense of wonder and intellectual sophistication in considering a state prior to existence and beyond death and immortality, especially if one remembers that the Mosaic Laws were being revealed around this same time period. The Rg Veda also contains hymns devoted to the power of speech (vac), which is manifest as a goddess who makes men wise. Through speech, which is the prime medium of the Vedic seers or prophets, truth is revealed and the truth of speech is seen as a power. In the Upanishads, speech is identified with the absolute Brahman, from which appearances, names, and their forms, are manifested. According to Hindu thought, the relation between the unmanifest Brahman and the world of multiplicity is through the cosmic sound of the mantra aum. The text states that, *as all leaves are held*

together by a stalk, so all sound is held together by aum. Any understanding of Hindu thought or theology has to begin with language and communication. Revelation is considered as divine communication to humanity through messengers, expressed through language. The injunctions of the Veda are in language, and the theological commentarial traditions are in language. Language for the Vedic Hindu inspires, clarifies, and reveals truth and meaning, therefore is a fundamental concern and starting point of theological investigation and study.

The leading thinker of the Grammarian school of Hindu thought during the fifth century BC/ 3200 FTB, Panini, explained grammar as being fundamentally concerned with the nature of existence and ultimately about the quest for liberation. The analysis of language becomes not merely a task itself or a task to ensure the correct transmission of the Veda, but a path or door leading to liberation. Language is a means of release from transmigration, or attachment to the wheel of reincarnation. Hindus believe the immortal Brahman becomes known through the purification of the word, which occurs through the study of grammar. Additionally, the study and use of correct forms of language produce a force of success and consciousness which moves the seeker away from impure speech tendencies and impure actions, towards the pure goal of the vision of the absolute. Through language, and specifically through its precise and deep understanding, humans are saved, according to the Hindu teachings.

Basic Principles of Hindu Teachings and Thought

- Assume the revelation of the Veda
- Proclaim to have liberation (moksa) as purpose of existence
- Assume a transcendent, supreme in excellence, reality beyond the contingencies of the human condition.
- Offer systematic explanations and interpretations
- Concerned with ideas about the structure of the body, the nature of matter, and the functioning of consciousness
- Concerned with Ontology, the nature of being and reality and Epistemology, the theory of knowledge
- Apprehend and utilize the six means or methods of valid knowledge: perception, inference, verbal authority, analogy, presumption, non-apprehension

Apart from its concern with and its relation to being, Hindu theologies have been concerned with the idea and relation of 'the one to the many'. The one to the many is the Hindu revelation and yogic experience that refers to an idea about an absolute reality that is unitary and without second, yet experience of the world concludes that existence is manifold and diverse. What is the relation between this unique one and the diversified many? Some Hindu theologies maintain that the relation is one of identity. That the absolute is ultimately identical with the many and difference is merely illusory. Others say that the relation is of difference and it is merely illusory; while others say that the relation is of difference and that the one and the many are quite ontologically distinct. While others maintain that both identity and difference are true of the relation between the one and the many. Hindu theologies arrive at different positions with regard to this fundamental question. The question of being is related to the epistemological question of causation. Hindu theories of causation can be broadly categorized into two. The first theory of causation, Satkaryavada, maintains that the effect is pre-existent in the cause, as a pot (the effect) pre-exists in the clay (material cause). The other theory, Asatkaryavada, maintains that the effect does not pre-exist the cause.

One of the more notable aspects of Hindu Theology and Philosophy is that it is expressed and presented primarily through commentaries and sub-commentaries on the original sacred texts. Sutras are condensed aphorisms, short sentences expressing a truth or practical knowledge, which summarize the teachings of a particular Hindu school of thought. Basically, they are interpretations and others viewpoints and arguments of original texts. The original aim of writing commentaries was to accentuate these aphorisms, to illuminate its truth and not to say something new or original, although the commentaries inevitably do. A commentary (bhāṣya) is an extensive explanation of a Sutra. An author might compose a sub-commentary on verses which he himself has composed. The commentaries reveal the vibrant and living tradition in the Hindu theology, with creative writing, reading and interpretations at its essence. These intellectual and literary traditions become codified by the medieval period into a standard list of six orthodox systems, the Saddarsanas.

To put the Saddarsanas into a system or codification is an attempt to delineate, within the sphere of Vedic orthodoxy, traditions of rigorous philosophical debate which have distinct differences between them, yet share a common terminology and a common commentarial style. While the authors within some of the schools share many views in common, it

should not be assumed that all thinkers within a Darsana share the same opinions. The six orthodox Hindu systems are: Samkhya, which is the enumeration school which presents a dualism between matter (prakrti) and the self (purusa), both of which are real, though ontologically distinct. Another system would be Yoga, the school of Patanjali, which assumes the metaphysics of Samkhya. Another would be Mimamsa, the tradition of Vedic exegesis which assumes the reality of the many. Next, Vedanta, the tradition which developed from the Upanishads and argues for the reality of the one and in one of its forms, denies the reality of the many. Another would be Nyaya, the school of logic. And finally, Vaishesika, the atomist school, associated with Nyaya, which assumes the reality of the many, and that the constituents of existence do not arise from a shared source, rather each phenomenon is distinct and separate. These six are often coupled into three distinct groups. Samkhya-Yoga, because Samkhya is the theoretical substrate of classical Yoga. Mimamsa-Vedanta, because Vedanta is a continuation of Mimamsa. And the third of the broader classifications is Nyaya-Vaishesika, because Nyaya logic is used in the metaphysical speculations of Vaishesika. Nyaya and Vaishesika are systems of a more technical nature, concerned with categories of being, language, and logic.

The Samkhya, enumeration, system is the oldest systematic philosophy to have emerged in the Hindu tradition, and is enormously influential on later theological schools within Hindu thought. Other schools and systems, such as Nyaya and Vedanta, developed during the early centuries of the common era partly due to the reactions to the Samkhya Philosophy. The term Samkhya means enumeration or calculation. It has two meanings or senses. In a general sense used in renouncer or detached traditions, including Jainism and Buddhism, it denotes the enumeration, coming into being, and categorization of elements which comprise the universe. The other meaning would be of a more specific nature to refer to the Samkhya philosophical system which developed a tradition of commentaries upon its key texts and is the backdrop to Patanjali's Yoga. These uses are chronological; the earlier generally intended to categorize the cosmos and human psychology. These early commentaries may be described as proto-samkhya (atheistic), and occurs very early in other renouncer traditions, while the systematic (dualism) philosophy developed later, from about the fourth century CE/4200 FTB. The general foundational ideas and speculations about the enumeration of the elements or constituents of the cosmos are found in Proto-Samkhya, Jain, Buddhist, and early Brahmanical speculations. They also include medical speculations that appear not to have been derived from one another, but from a common ideological context in which Samkhya-like enumeration of the categories of experience is central. The

earliest enumeration of cosmic principles in the Brahmanical (Buddhist) traditions comes in the Chandogya Upanishads. They describe the idea of a single being (eka) or truth (sat), which produces fire, which in turn produces water, which in turn becomes food. The text also refers to the sense of self-identity similar to the Samkhya idea of ego (ahamkara). The enumeration of categories is also found in other Upanishads, notably the Katha and the Svetasvatra Upanishads. Buddhist thought also includes pre-systematic listings of elements of experience and of the world. These can be found in the Mahabharata, particularly in the section known as the Moksadharma, and in the Bhagavad Gita.

The concepts and ideas that have come to be associated with the Samkhya philosophy are based on the idea of a dualism between the self, or pure consciousness (purusa) and matter (prakrti). The self appears to be entangled with matter. Liberation (kaivalya) is the attainment of the discriminative knowledge that pure consciousness is eternally distinct from primordial matter and that there is proximity between them. The realization of this results in the cessation of suffering and reincarnation. The power of discrimination, knowledge, and awareness allows consciousness to distinguish the self from what is not the self, and to perceive that the self was never actually bound to matter. This self is transcendent, the silent witness behind the embodied subject of the first person predicates. This empirical self, the self of I statements, is due to the evolution of matter from a primordial state, but is not itself the true subject. Whereas in western philosophical dualism there is distinction made between the mind and the body, in the Samkhya system, the dualism is between the self and matter, which embraces what in traditional western philosophy has been called the mind. The subject of first person predicates is within the realm of prakrti, the true self is beyond. Prakrti is a wider concept than the western category of matter. It also includes the concept of mind. The total concept of prakrti evolves or transforms from an unmanifested state into a manifested state, through a series of stages or levels in which different categories appear. These categories, or tattvas, comprise the universe of experience. This evolution or transformation (parinama) is governed, or kept in balance, by three qualities (gunas). The qualities of light (sattvas), passion or energy (rajas), and darkness or inertia (tamas). These qualities are very important in Hindu thought and later become the basis for a number of associations and classifications. While the self (purusa) appears to be entangled in matter and appears to transmigrate in a subtle body, it is only the empirical self which is under the sway of the gunas, which transmigrates.

The Samkhya enumeration of the principles of experience, which

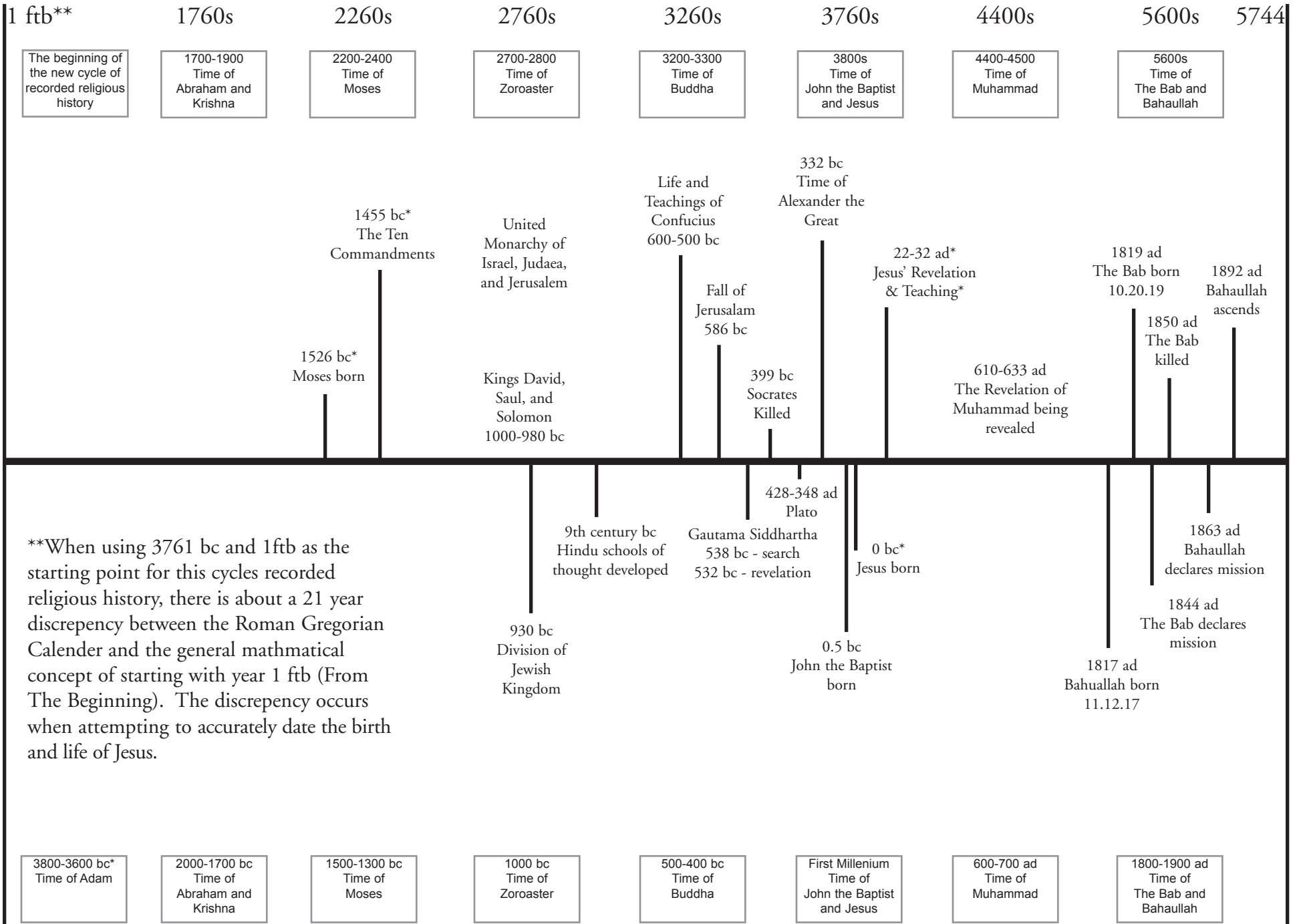
are divided into twenty-five categories, refers both to individual psycho-physiology experience and to cosmological categories. The evolution of matter is both a cosmic and individual process. Both, physiological functions and the constituents of the physical world emerge from the sense of ego. The first transformation from matter is translated as the intellect or higher mind (buddhi) or great one (mahat), and refers both to an individual's psychological functioning and to a higher level in a hierarchical cosmology. From buddhi the sense of "I" or ego (ahamkara) develops, from which emerges the mind (manas), the five senses and other objects, the five organs of action or motor functioning, and the five subtle and five gross elements.

The Samkhya system develops a context in which renunciation and the practice of Yoga are common. Yoga is concerned with the transformation of the consciousness and the mapping of various inner states of consciousness. Samkhya is an atheistic, does not include idea of one ultimate Creator, system, whereas Yoga Darsana admits of the idea of a God or Lord (Isvara) as a special kind of self (purusa) which has never been entangled in prakrti, and which can be the focus of meditation. These theistic tendencies are developed in the later traditions of Hindu thought. While Hindu theologians will assert that the system does not require the idea of a Creator, God, or Light, they will not refute that the idea of one is not irreconcilable with the earlier Samkhya views and ideas.

JUDAISM AND MOSES

The individual and life of Moses is quite indicative and supportive of the concept of progressive revelation. Moses is commonly known and accredited as the originator of the teachings known as Judaism. The teachings are compiled in a text named the Torah, which is recorded in Hebrew. The Hebrew language utilizes symbols which represent actions and energies of this existence. The word combinations created by the symbols in the Torah are continuous, meaning having no punctuation. The differences between Hebrew and the English language make it very difficult to translate, or relay the ideas being expressed, accurately. The recipients of the teachings of Moses, which have come to be known as the Jews, were the people of Judea and the surrounding areas, and Judaism was the social system derived from the revelation and teachings of Moses. The ethnic or racial make-up of the Jews was quite diverse. The term was intended to distinguish them as believers of the teachings, and the believers came from many different places of origin. The current racial conception of the word did not develop for thousands of years. The teachings of Judaism could be simplified as, living an existence where you love thy neighbor as you would love yourself.

History has Moses as a man brought up in a tyrannical household, historically accepted as that of Pharaoh in Egypt. As a young man, to prevent an act of cruelty upon another individual, Moses struck down and killed an Egyptian man. Afterwards he fled to seclusion in the wilderness, where he became a shepherd. According to history, it was a man such as this that freed a people from captivity and took them from Egypt to the Holy Land to make them the recipients of Divine teachings. They were ignorant people and through the teachings of Moses they became the wisest. As the result of the teachings and institutions revealed and established by Moses, they attained a position that entitled them to honor amongst all other nations, and their reputation spread to all over the world. Moses established laws and ordinances that gave guidance and true life to the people of Israel, and led them to the highest possible degree of civilization for the time. The level of development was to such a degree that the philosophers of Greece came to acquire knowledge from the learned men of Israel. One such philosopher was Socrates, who visited Syria and left with the knowledge of the unity of God and the immortality of the soul. After his return to Greece, he began proclaiming and teaching what he had been taught in Syria. The people of Greece opposed Socrates



teachings, accused him of impiety, arraigned him before the Areopagus, and condemned him to death by poison.

As history depicts the situation, it seems miraculous that an individual such as Moses would be capable of accomplishing the things he is accredited as accomplishing. Jewish history can be considered as indicative of the concept of one member of society being chosen by The Creator to bring teachings for the spiritual and material advancement of the people of the time.

The Ten Commandments

As stated originally in the Hebrew language and recorded in the Torah and then translated into the English language:

1. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth
3. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments
4. Thou shalt not take the Lord's name in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain - remember the Sabbath day, to keep in holy-six days shalt thou labor, and do thy work: - but the seventh day is the Sabbath of thy Lord God: in it thou shalt not do any work, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: - for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all in them, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it
5. Honour thy father and mother that thy days will be long upon the land which the Lord thy God given thee
6. Thou shalt not kill
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery
8. Thou shalt not steal
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbors wife, nor his manservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbors

ZOROASTER

The life, writings, and teachings of an individual by the name of Spenta Zarathushtra, Zoroaster in Greek, Zarthosht in India and Persia, has been used to create the belief system referred to as Zoroastrianism. Historians and religious scholars generally date his life sometime between 1500 and 1000 BC/ 2200 and 2700 FTB on the basis of his style of writing. He lived in Persia, which is around the areas of Iran and Iraq. Zoroaster's teachings replaced a native polytheistic religion at the time of his revelation. The major text of the teachings is the Zend Avesta. Zoroaster's writings included the concept of progressive revelation and taught monotheism with a single supreme god, Ahura Mazda, Wise Lord. Portions of the Zend Avesta are Zoroaster's teachings presented in a series of hymns called the Gathas. The rest of the Zend Avesta was written at later dates and deals with rituals, practice of worship, and other traditions of the faith. Zoroaster and his people were persecuted and attacked because of their beliefs. The Zoroastrians finally won the support of the king during the sixth century BC/ 3300 FTB, and Zoroastrianism became the state religion of various Persian empires until the seventh century CE/ 4400 FTB.

Zoroastrians dedicate their lives to a three-fold path represented by their motto; Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds. Asceticism and celibacy are condemned within the teachings. Purity and avoidance of defilement are valued, and a belief exists that in order to combat evil, one must at all times oppose the forces of evil and people who side with them. Zoroastrianism stresses monotheism, while recognizing the universal sway of two opposite forces. A central feature of the faith is the sacred fire that is constantly kept burning in every Zoroastrian home, fueled by fragrant sandalwood. Fire is considered the only worshipful symbol, as it is seen as the great purifier and sustainer, and of the nature of the sun itself. The writings of Zoroaster are not works of instruction, they are inspired, passionate addresses, some directed to The Creator specifically. Their poetic form is of a form which has been traced back to Indo-European times. It seems to have been linked with a mantic tradition, created by priestly seers who desired to express in lofty words their personal apprehension of the Divine. At its time of appearance, such poetry could only have been fully understood by the learned. Since Zoroaster believed that he had been entrusted by The Creator with a message for all mankind, he must also have preached in plain words to ordinary people. His

teachings were handed down orally in his community from generation to generation, and finally committed to writing under the third Iranian empire, the Sasanians, in the language of the time, which was Middle Persian, also called Pahlavi.

The inclusion of the life and teachings of Zoroaster is necessary and relevant to this presentation because of its historical significance and influence. Most importantly because of the inclusion and support of the concept of progressive revelation in the teachings, which is foundational in the establishment of the purpose of this compilation of information, which is highlighting the Truth of the oneness of existence, humanity, and the revealed word and will of the Creator.

BUDDHISM

The term Buddha means the enlightened one. The term has come to be associated with an individual by the name of Siddhartha Gautama, whose personal experience and revelation has been the foundation for the teachings of Buddhism. History has Siddhartha being from Kapilavashtu, India and leaving his family as a teenager in 538 BC/ 3238 FTB, to become a wandering ascetic. Siddhartha wandered for six years, regularly sat at the feet of Hindu religious figures undertaking penances in hopes of attaining answers and peace, but the life of the sages did not appeal to him nor provide the answers and peace he desired. Siddhartha become an ascetic because he had become appalled by the seeming inherent human condition of suffering and wanted to find a way to circumvent or end the pain and suffering associated with existence. From the religious study of the Hindu scriptures as a youth, to the ascetic life as a young man, Siddhartha realized nothing he had experienced satiated his desire for enlightenment and peace. Siddhartha is then reported to have abandoned all things, and put himself into a meditative trance. From this state of consciousness, Siddhartha gains enlightenment and finds the peace he had been searching for his entire existence.

As a Buddhist, the purpose and goal of existence is attaining the state of Nirvana, or the end of suffering. Buddhist thought, which is derived from the Hindu teachings, hinge on a concept that there is an inadequacy in normal conceptual language in the expression of the Divine attributes, and these attributes can only be grasped intuitively through the mental disciplines of meditation and experience. Additionally, in the world of sense and flux of words and concepts, experience is the only reliable proof. The basic message of the Buddhist teachings is that in this world of suffering, only one thing is stable and firm, Dharma, which is the truth about right living, which alone can free us from pain. The teachings also entreat people not to rely on the mercy and forgiveness of The Creator, but to save themselves by living right. The teachings emphasize that the sense of bliss and transcendence experienced during meditation is natural to humanity and can be attained by anyone who lives the right life, and that an individual would know nirvana exists because by living the good life, they get a glimpse of it.

Some of the major Buddhist scriptures include, Triptaka, Anguttara-Nikaya, Dhammapada, and Samyutta-Nikaya. The Buddhist

teachings can be summarized by their Four Noble Truths, the first being the Truth of suffering. Suffering is the central fact of life. Being born is pain, growing old is pain, sickness is pain, death is pain. Union with what we dislike is pain, separation from what we like is pain, not obtaining what we desire is pain. The second is the Truth of the origin of suffering. The cause of suffering is the desire, craving, or thirst for sensual pleasures, for existence and experience, for worldly possessions and power. These cravings bind one to the wheel of rebirth and suffering. The third is the Truth of cessation of suffering. Suffering can be brought to an end only by the complete cessation of desires, the forsaking, relinquishing, and detaching of oneself from desire and craving. The fourth is the Truth of the path to ending suffering. The means to the end of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path, which is, right belief, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation. This is the path to the attainment of Nirvana.

In one of the texts of the Buddhist teachings, Triptaka, Siddhartha clearly affirms the Truth of progressive revelation with his statements in regards to his station as a Messenger from the Creator, and the coming of another Messenger of The Truth.

"I am not the first Buddha who came upon the earth, nor shall I be the last. In due time another Buddha will rise in the world, a holy one, a supremely enlightened one, endowed with wisdom and goodness...knowing the universe, an incomparable leader of men, a master of angels and mortals. He will reveal to you the same eternal truths that I have taught you. He will preach his religion, glorious at the goal, in the spirit, in the letter. He will proclaim a religious life, wholly perfect and pure: such as I now claim."

Digha Nidayalll: 75-6

Four Noble Truths

- I. The Truth of suffering
- II. The Truth of the origin of suffering, desire
- III. The Truth of cessation of suffering, cessation of desires, detachment
- IV. The Truth of the path to ending suffering,

The Noble Eightfold Path:

right belief, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation. This is the path to the attainment of Nirvana.

CONFUCIUS

The purpose and importance of recognizing and highlighting the life and teachings of Confucius is that he is an example of an individual who claimed no station other than just a man who recognized the Truth and the right way and devoted his existence to manifesting it. This is or should be inspiration, a model, and motivation for all members of society to create a just and right world for us all to exist in.

The teachings of Confucius began disseminating in and around China around 2,500 years ago. Its founder was Supreme Sage K'ung-futsu, later to be known as Confucius and Second Sage Meng-tzu, Mencius. The major texts are The Analects, Doctrine of the Mean, and Great Learning and Mencius. Confucius and his followers traveled throughout the many feudal states of the Chinese empire persuading rulers to adopt his social reforms. The teachings of Confucius did not offer a point-by-point program to the leaders, but stressed instead the idea of the "Way", or "One Thread", which would be translated as humanity or love. The ideas associated with the "Way" were meant to be infused with the policies of the leaders in order to produce the ideal society for individuals to exist within. These ideas urged individuals to strive for perfect virtue, righteousness, and improvement of character. They taught the importance of harmony in the family, order in the state, and peace in the empire, although Confucius saw them as inherently separate yet interdependent. The teachings emphasize a code of conduct, self-cultivation and propriety, and the attainment of social and national order. The teachings focus more on human duty and the ideal of the transcendent existence, than on a divine or unknowable reality. Confucius fasted, worshiped the ancestors, attended sacrifices and sought to live in harmony with his idea of Ascension. Confucius himself deeply believed in the ideas of Ascension (Heaven) and the Light of the Creator.

According to Confucius, the "Way" leads human beings to enlightenment. By this "Way", *one can unite with Heaven, then without any display, one becomes manifested; without any movement, one produces changes, and without any effort, one accomplishes its ends.* Confucius believed and taught that all the people of the world are brothers and sisters under the one and only God. Confucius promised those who followed him no great riches or secrets for worldly power or fame. Confucius spoke only of an existence. Confucius spoke, lived, and dreamed of a world

where happiness, good, and peace would replace misery, evil, and war. His dream was not merely of a world as it had been or might be, his was a dream of a world as it should be. Confucius was a man who never led an army, ruled a kingdom, or conquered a nation. He was a man who shaped the flow of human history and established a system of ideas that has lasted over twenty five hundred years.

The teachings of Confucius is basically humanism, a philosophy or attitude that is concerned with human beings and their achievements and interests, rather than with the abstract beings and problems of theology. According to Confucius thought, the human being is the center of the universe. Although the human being is the center, it does not and cannot live alone, but with other human beings. For human beings, the ultimate goal is individual happiness. The necessary condition to achieve individual happiness is the establishment of peace with all other human beings. In order to obtain peace, Confucius taught about human relations consisting of the five relationships, which are based on love and duties. With proper relationships, war would be abolished, peace established, and the Great Unity of the world would be developed.

Confucius did not wish to look for a paradise in the next existence, he rather wanted to create and experience paradise during this existence. Confucius states that this paradise shall manifest when *"the Way" prevails, and the world will become common to all. The people will elect virtuous and talented persons for the government; and they will promote good faith and friendship. Thus, men will not consider only their own parents as their parents, nor treat only their own children as their children. The aged will find a meaningful life until their death; the able persons are fully employed; and the young are provided with upbringing; and the forlorn and helpless people, the disabled and the sick, will all be supported by the state. Every man will have his own rights and every woman her own belongings. Students of the teachings of Confucius hate to see goods lying about in waste, yet they do not hoard them for themselves. They dislike the thought that their energies are not fully used, yet they use them not for egoistic ends. Therefore, all evil plotting is prevented in advance and rebels do not arise. Thus, perfect security will prevail everywhere, and people can leave their outer gates unchecked.* This is called the Great Unity, as presented by Confucius.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Historians have painted a picture of John the Baptist as a wandering ascetic who probably was an Essene. John regarded the Jerusalem establishment as hopelessly corrupt and preached intense sermons against it. He urged the populace to repent and to accept the Essene rite of purification of baptism in the River Jordan. The Bible has John the Baptist being the cousin of Jesus by way of his mother, Mary, being cousins to John's mother, Elisabeth. The Bible has John being called by the Creator to speak of the coming of the Light, Jesus, yet he had not seen, met, nor knew when the light was to be revealed. According to biblical history, Jesus came to John to be baptized, and that is when John realizes he has finally come to see what he has been compelled and commanded by the Creator to speak about. In the Book of John chapter one, the stations of John and Jesus are clearly illustrated and exemplified. Verse six begins, *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John (7) The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe (8) He was not the light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light (9) That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (10) He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not (11) He came unto his own, and his own received him not (12) But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (15) John bear witness of him, and cried, saying, this was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me (16) And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace (17) For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

The importance of establishing the stations and relationship between John, Jesus, and the Creator is that it exemplifies the concept of the progressive revealing of the Creator's Will and desire through chosen Messengers, and establishes the station of Jesus. The individual and circumstances of John the Baptist illustrates the concept of the Divine spirit entering, compelling, or emanating from a person in order to manifest the Will of the Creator.

When the leaders of the Jewish establishment sent priests from

Jerusalem to ask John who he was or what station he claimed for himself, the exchange was recorded in the Book of John, chapter one verse (20) *And he confessed, and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ (21) And they asked him, what then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No (22) Then said they unto him, who art thou that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? (23) John said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias (25) and they asked him, and said unto him, why baptizest thou then, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? (26) John answered them, saying, I baptize with water, but there standeth one amongst you, whom ye know not (27) he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. (29) The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (30) This is whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me (31) And I knew him not, but that he should be manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water (32) And John bare record, saying I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him (33) And I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost (34) And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

There may not be any stronger support for the concept of Progressive Revelation than the record of John the Baptist speaking on his being instructed by the Creator to speak about and make the way for the coming of an individual especially endowed with the Spirit.

JESUS AND CHRISTIANITY

Upon reading the text contained within the Bible, a searcher will find very few of Jesus' actual words recorded in the Gospels, especially since the four Gospels are four different attempts to account the same events. The Gospels were not intended as biographies of Jesus' life, they were meant to be thematic portraits of the events characterizing Jesus' life. Collectively they attempt to depict the life of Jesus in a manner in which the objective viewing of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Each gospel was addressed to a particular audience and focused on specific aspects of his life in order to appeal to each audience.. The gospel of Mark was intended for the Romans, written around 40 years after the death of Jesus, begins with the initial meeting of the adult Jesus with John the Baptist, and uniquely recounts half of the miracles performed by Jesus. The Book of Matthew has an intended audience of the Jewish people, makes references to the prophets of the Old Testament and Judaism, and contains the genealogy of Jesus originating at Abraham. The Gospel of Luke was intended for the Greeks and was written by a physician friend of Paul. This Gospel is the only one which attempts to depict occurrences associated with the birth and younger life of Jesus, which is in polar contrast to the Book of John, which begins with an introduction to the station of Jesus and continues with an introduction of John the Baptist at his initial meeting with Jesus, the man. Much of the material in the Gospels has been affected by later developments in the churches that were developed by Paul after the death of Jesus. One prime example would be the adopted doctrine of Jesus being the incarnation in whole of the Creator not being canonized, made official doctrine, until 400 years after Jesus' death. At its basic level, the message presented through the life and teachings of Jesus is that charity and loving kindness were the most important of the Mitzvoth, divine commandments or principle deeds of life. Simply, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The Gospels tell of Jesus possessing certain divine powers or abilities, which enabled him to perform God-like tasks of manifestation, healing the sick,

and the forgiving of sins. Jesus never claimed to be the sole possessor of such powers. In fact, objective history tells us that faith healers were familiar religious figures in Galilee, and like Jesus, they were mendicants, who preached, healed the sick, and exorcised demons. Jesus in actuality promised the disciples, as well as all other believers, that if they had faith they would possess and enjoy these powers as well. Faith not meaning adopting a theology or belief, but faith meaning cultivating a sense of understanding, surrender, openness, and unity with the Creator and the Divine System.

Of the few words of Jesus recorded in the Bible, one concept spoken on by Jesus was the concept of the Word and Will of The Creator being revealed to humanity through successive messengers and it being The Divine Spirit that abides within these individuals, emanates from them, or brings the revelation to them. This union with the Spirit is what elevates these individuals to the station of Divine Messengers. In the Book of John chapter fourteen, Jesus is quite explicit when speaking to the disciples in regards to the Divine Spirit's radiant light, which is manifest in the being of himself, no longer existing in the form it is currently in for much longer. Jesus is speaking of his physical forms presence and energies leaving the physical world, and those energies being of a divine nature from the Creator, and those energies being noticeable absent and missed. This is the chapter where Jesus talks of his coming betrayal and sacrifice. Jesus' essential verification of the Truth of Progressive Revelation is crucial in supporting this presentations purpose, which is objectively and academically presenting the concept and idea of a correlative cycle of physical appearances of the divine spiritual energies of the Creator, in the form of individuals teaching and proclaiming the Word and Will of God. The establishment of the Truth of cycle of Progressive Revelation is foundational in the establishment of the ultimate Truth of the oneness of the cycle and the complementary and unitary nature of the messages brought to humanity by the Messengers. From these agreed upon Truths, society can then agree upon a way to exist together peacefully.

Chapter fourteen of the Book of John contains further illustration of Jesus speaking on the concept of the divine spirit of the Creator abiding within an individual to create what is commonly referred to as a Prophet, Messiah, Manifestation, or Messenger. The chapter has Jesus speaking to the individuals persecuting and condemning him to death. (16) *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide by you forever (17) Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you (18) I will not leave you comfortless: I*

will come to you (19) yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me because I live, ye shall live also (20) At that day ye shall know that I am in my father, and ye in me, and I in you (21) He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him (23) Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him (24) He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings, and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. (25) These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you (26) But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (28) Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the father, for my father is greater than I (29) And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe (30) Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me

The importance of highlighting the concept of progressive revelation and specifically the words of Jesus supporting the concept is that a polar idea has developed in some Christian ideologies regarding a superior status given to Jesus over other Messengers, which has created major points of contention within our society historically and presently. The Truth of progressive revelation shall remove all points of contention on that subject, as well as many others. Further support for that Truth lies in Jesus' referring to himself throughout the Bible as the "Son of Man." The original Aramaic phrase used for translation for the English language Bible, *bar nasha*, in the Aramaic language is actually used to stress the weakness and mortality of the human condition. This point is important once again because of the superiority complex, false pride and exclusionary attitude that has developed with some individuals who claim to follow the teachings of Jesus. This ideology regards Jesus as holding some exclusive position as the Creator's "only begotten son." The basic concept itself of the infinite Creator being limited to having one son whom is sacrificed by the Creator's own creation is illogical and incongruent with the concept and conceived attributes of the Creator.

As stated at the beginning of this section, very few of Jesus' actual words are recorded in Bible. Although this is the case, the words that are recorded are quite clear and explicit in illustrating the major ideas and concepts associated with the intended purpose of this compilation of information. For example, chapter five of the Book of John has Jesus

speaking to disbelievers on his station, verse (39) *Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.* (46) *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me* (47) *but if ye not believe his writings, how shall ye believe my words?* How has there been any doubt or contention concerning the similarities of derivation, correlativeness and essential oneness of Judaism and Christianity with Jesus speaking on Moses and his teachings explicitly in this way?

The Book of John chapter eight has Jesus speaking to the Israelites on his station, and illustrates the forwardness and clarity in which Jesus spoke with, and the inability and refusal of his own people to recognize his station (56) *your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.* (57) *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* (58) *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.* (59) *Then they took up stones to cast at him...*

Jesus is very clear on his station as a Messenger of the Creator, and not the Creator itself. The derivation of the alteration of the history and teachings of Jesus as the incarnation of the Creator in whole on earth is somewhat unfathomable because Jesus spoke exceptionally frank and clear on the exact opposite fact. The Book of John, chapter twelve verse (44) *Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but him that sent me.* Additionally, chapter thirteen verse (13) *Verily, verily, I say unto you the servant is not greater than the Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent.* Chapter fifteen of the same Book of John has further illustration of the clarity in which Jesus speaks of his station. (24) *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin, but now have they both seen and hated both me and my father* (25) *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that it is written in their law, they hated me without a cause* (26) *But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.* The following chapter of The Book of John may contain the clearest and strongest example of Jesus speaking on and giving validation for the foundational truth of Progressive Revelation. Chapter sixteen verse (12) *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now* (13) *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come* (14) *He will glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you* (15) *All things that the*

Father hath are mine, therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and show it unto you.

How did a man who apparently to all was a common man, referred to as the son of a carpenter in the Bible, rise with such great energy and power that he challenged and reformed a religious system that had lasted fifteen hundred years. At a time when the slightest deviation from the law exposed the offender to danger or death. In the days of Jesus, the morals of the world and the conditions of the Israelites had become completely confused and corrupted, and Israel had fallen into a state of the utmost degradation, misery, and bondage. During this period, the Israelites had been taken captive by the Chaldeans and Persians, reduced to slavery by the Assyrians, became subjects to the vassals of the Greeks, and eventually ruled over by the Romans. Jesus abrogated the Mosaic Law, reformed the general morals of humanity, and once again laid the foundation of the eternal glory of the recipients of Divine revelation. He brought teachings for the general happiness, well-being, and progression for all humanity. The majority of those who opposed him the most were from amongst his own people, the Israelites. In fact, the ruler of Rome gave the final decision to kill Jesus to the people of Israel, and they chose to remove themselves from the presence of the Divine Light itself.

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

John 19:30

ISLAM AND MUHAMMAD

The revelation of Muhammad was revealed in the desert of Hijaz, in the Arabian Peninsula, which was a desolate, barren place, physically as well as spiritually. Muhammad himself was illiterate and his revelation was first recorded by others on blade bones of sheep and palm leaves. As Muhammad received his message, he would recite it aloud so that others could be of or keep record of the revelation. The Quranic message contains a vision of the unity of all rightly guided faiths. The prophet Muhammad supposedly received his first revelation on the seventh day of Ramadan in 610 AD/ 4370 FTB. Islamic tradition records that he had been transported in his sleep by the angel Gabriel on a celestial horse. On arrival, he was greeted by Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and a crowd of other prophets, who confirmed Muhammad in his own prophetic mission. Then Gabriel and Muhammad began their ascent up a ladder through the seven heavens, with each heaven being presided over by a Prophet, where finally he reaches the divine sphere. Muhammad did not readily accept his selection as the bringer of revelation to his people. It took the initial consolation and guidance from his wife Khadija, the confirmation of the revelation by her cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal, who was a Christian and familiar with the text and the process of revelation, and several years before Muhammad was convinced of his station and began teaching to his people, the Quraysh.

The Quran was supposedly revealed to Muhammad over a period of twenty-three years, segment by segment. In later years Muhammad is recorded as saying, *"Never once did I receive a revelation without feeling like my soul was being torn away from me."* He also said he had to listen to the divine words intently, struggling to make sense of a vision and significance that did not always come in to him in clear verbal form. He said *"sometimes the divine message was clear, he seemed to see Gabriel and hear what he was saying, but other times the revelation was distressingly unclear like the reverberations of a bell."* Muhammad presented Revelation as a very difficult process. Muhammad used to enter a tranced state, sweat profusely and sometimes seemingly loose consciousness during the process of Revelation. He was often known to experience an interior heaviness likened to grief, which compelled him to put his head between his knees. The revelation of the Quran did not come to Muhammad in the same

order in which it has been put together in the Quran. As a new segment was revealed, Muhammad recited it aloud, the Muslims learned it by heart and those few who were literate wrote it down. The first official written compilation of the revelations was not made until over twenty years after his death. The compilers put the longest sutras at the beginning and the shorter ones at the end. The arrangement is relative because the Quran is neither a narrative nor an argument. It is a reflection of various themes that need no sequential order. The Quran was not meant for private perusal, but for liturgical recitation. Quran means, the Recitation. As its name suggests, it is meant to be recited aloud. The sound of the language is an essential part of its effect. Reading the Quran is a spiritual discipline which Muslims claim gives them a transcendent experience, due to the sacred language in which the revealed word is recited. A similar situation to Hebrew in Judaism and Sanskrit in Hinduism. The Quran had such a powerful effect on those who heard its sutras that even disbelievers of Muhammad were moved or stirred by its recitation. It appeared to many at his time that Muhammad had created a new language or literary form.

During the first years of his mission, Muhammad attracted many converts from the younger generation, underprivileged, women, slaves, and other marginalized groups. His teachings were fairly widely accepted by the people initially. In the beginning there was no formal opposition from the leading Quraysh until Muhammad forbade the Muslims to worship the pagan Gods. It seems as though Muhammad did not emphasize the monotheistic aspect of his teachings for the first few years of his mission. When he condemned these ancient cults as idolatrous, he lost most followers and Islam became a despised and persecuted minority, virtually overnight. Muhammad absolutely refused to compromise with the Quraysh on the matter of idolatry or any type of worship of the pagan Gods. To give allegiance to material goods or to put trust in a lesser being was idolatry (shirk), the greatest sin in Islam. Life for Muslims in Mecca became virtually impossible after the fall out with the Quraysh.

Islam makes it clear that we can only see the Creator in Its activities, which adapt Its ineffable reality to our limited understanding. The Quran urges Muslims to cultivate a perpetual consciousness (taqwa) of the face or the self of the Creator that surrounds them on all sides. *"Wherever you turn, there is the face of Allah."* In the Quran Allah is given ninety-nine names or attributes. These emphasize that the Creator is the source of all positive qualities we find in the universe. The Creator is the giver of life, the knower of all things, the producer of speech, and without the Creator there would be no life, knowledge, or speech. The Creator is the only true existence.

The first of five pillars, or principles, of Islam is the Shahadah, which is the Muslim profession of faith. *"I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is his messenger."* This assertion demands Muslims to integrate their lives by making the Creator their focus and sole priority. To say that the Creator was one was not a mere numerical definition; it was a declaration and call to make unity the driving factor in one's life and society. To a Muslim, the unity of the Creator could be glimpsed in the truly integrated self. The knowledge of the divine unity requires Muslims by principle and essence to recognize the religious aspirations of others. This recognition begins with the understanding of the truth that there is only one Creator or God, and all rightly guided religions must derive from there alone. This included an understanding and belief that the ultimate reality, or Truth, would be culturally conditioned and expressed by different cultures and societies in different ways, yet the focus of all true worship is One and must have been inspired by and directed toward the being whom the Arabs had always known and called Allah.

Muhammad and the Quran did not see Revelation as canceling out the message and insights of the previous Revelation or Prophet. It stressed the continuity of the religious experience of mankind. The intolerance generally associated with Islam is not over a rival vision of the Creator, but because of an intolerance of injustice. The Quran teaches that each new Prophet confirms and continues the teachings and insights of their predecessor and that the Creator has sent messengers to every people of the world. Frequently, topics in the Quran begin with the phrase, "Have you not seen," or "Have you not considered." The Quran regularly identifies itself with a reminder of knowledge that people have, had or should have. The Quran repeatedly points out that it is not a new message and that Muslims must emphasize their kinship with the older religions.

"Do not argue with the followers of the earlier revelation otherwise than in the most kindly manner, unless it be such of them as are set on doing evil, and say: "We believe in that which has been bestowed upon us, as well as that which has been bestowed upon you; for our God and your God is one and the same and it is unto him that we surrender ourselves." Quran 29:46

The Quran makes mention of the biblical personalities of Abraham, Noah, Moses, and Jesus. As well as Hud and Salih of the ancient Arab people of Midian and Thamood. Muhammad did not see himself as bringing anything new to his people, he considered himself bringing the knowledge of the God of Abraham, of the one God to his people, the Quraysh. Initially Muhammad thought he should only teach

his people in Mecca and the surrounding areas. Muhammad's understanding of his mission was to bring the word and will of the Creator to the Arab people in their own language. Muhammad never asked Jews or Christians to convert to Islam nor expected them to because they were already the recipients of an authentic revelation of their own, and Islam was the same message, just in the language of the Arabs. He considered himself the city's nadhir, or warner. He believed Allah had sent him to warn the Quraysh of the perils of their situation. Their situation being one, not where the Quraysh did not believe in Allah, but one of taking the Creator's all-encompassing benevolence for granted. They regarded themselves as the center of the universe with a presumptuous attitude of self-sufficiency. This attitude stemmed from their newly found mercantile success and subsequent materially prosperous community of Mecca. Appropriately, the early verses of the Koran encourage the Quraysh to become aware of God's benevolence, which they can see wherever they look.

The teachings of Muhammad came to be known as Islam, which could be defined as the act of essential surrender to Allah. A Muslim was an individual whom has surrendered their whole being to the Creator and the Divine system. In practical terms, Islam meant that Muslims had a duty and responsibility to create a just, equitable society where the poor and vulnerable are treated decently. This idea is expressed in the Muslim belief that it is not right to build a private fortune and hoard wealth, and that it is right and good to share the wealth of society fairly by giving a regular proportion of one's wealth to the poor. Alms-giving (zakat) and prayer (salat) represent two of the five pillars (rukun) or practices of Islam. In the teachings of Muhammad, there were no obligatory doctrines about the Creator. The Quran illustrates clear suspicion of theological speculation, dismissing it as zanna, or self-indulgent guesswork about something nobody can possibly prove. Muhammad would consider the invention of the altered doctrine of the incarnation of the Creator in whole into the being of Jesus and the idea of the Trinity as zanna. The Quran repeatedly condemns and proclaims them to be incongruent with the idea and attributes of the Creator.

The Quran teaches that the Creator created Adam, or the conceptual first man, in Its image, as the bible does. The Quran says the Creator did this so that It could contemplate Itself, as in a mirror. According to the Quran, that is why the Creator ordered the angles to bow down and worship the first man. The Quran teaches and points out that although man is supposedly created in the image of the Creator, on the individual basis, man does not possess all the perfections of the Creator.

According to the teachings of the Quran, revelation is not the writing down of a closed sacred history or tradition, and particularly not something eternal and unchangeable. It is the proclamation of the Creator's favors and thanklessness of men, the announcement of judgment and recompense, Allah's warning to the faithful world, and his guidance to right belief and conduct. Muhammad's concept of revelation was dynamic and not one of a static nature of the past. Scripture was not given to mankind once, for all in a fixed, unalterable form. Every people of the world has its scripture and its Prophets; so that all people may rightly lay claim to share the awakening and guidance which scripture gives. Islam teaches that the various records of Revelation in their scriptural sense and aim fully agree with one another, and that the scriptures confirm and validate one another. Muhammad had a very liberal conception of ritual prescriptions within religion, because such things were not grounded in any eternal Divine necessity. According to Muhammad, these prescriptions are only the appropriate regulations which the Creator has given various peoples according to their needs.

During the pre-Islamic period known as the Jahiliyyah, the Arabian attitude towards women included polygamy, no political or human rights, and female infanticide was common. Women were among Muhammad's earliest students and followers. Their emancipation was a project dear to his mission. The Quran strictly forbade the killing of female children and rebuked the Arabs for their dismay when a female child was born. It gave women legal rights of inheritance and divorce, which most western women and societies only received in the early twentieth century. Muhammad encouraged women to play an active role in the affairs of the tribe. Muhammad was known to help women with their study when they felt as if the men were out studying them. Muhammad was posed the question of why the Quran only addresses men when women had also surrendered themselves to Allah. Muhammad's response was a revelation that addressed men and women and emphasized the absolute moral and spiritual equality of the sexes, Quran 33:35. After inquisition by the female Muslims and the subsequent revelation, the Quran quite frequently addresses women explicitly. Unfortunately, in some instances the original teachings have been hijacked by men and the interpretations of the teachings twisted. The situation of the original Message being altered and manipulated by individuals is one found in most situations of Revelation. Modern day religious fanaticism illustrates this. An example of this would be that the Quran does not prescribe the veil for all women, but only for Muhammad's wives as a mark of their status. Another example would be the idea of polygamy. The taking of

multiple wives was in response to the men of the community dying in war and other Muslim men taking care of their families. Once Islam reached the civilized world, Muslims adopted the customs of other communities which relegated women to second class status. They adopted the custom of veiling women and secluding them in harems from Persia and the Christian Byzantium empires, where this type of treatment of women had been going on for some time. By the time of the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258 AD), the position of Muslim women was as bad as their sisters in Jewish and Christian society.

The Five Pillars of Faith

- I. The Shahadah: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet"
- II. Pray five times daily facing Mecca: at dawn, at noon, in the midafternoon, dusk, and after dark.
- III. Alms-giving (zakat)
- IV. A Muslim must fast for the month of Ramadan. During the fasting month, one must refrain from eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse from dawn until sunset.
- V. A Muslim must make a pilgrimage to Mecca, the Hajj, if physically and financially capable at least once in his or her lifetime

When Muhammad lived in Najran, he had a group of Christians living with them. Muhammad is recorded as saying, *"If anyone infringes their rights, I myself will be his enemy, and in the presence of God I will bring a charge against him."* Muhammad clearly illustrated his acceptance of all rightly guided faiths in his Edicts, or proclamations of his will. Muhammad's edicts stated that the lives, property, and honor of the Christians and Jews are under the protection of God. The Edict of the Second Caliph, leader of the Muslims, Umar, still exists at the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem today and echoes the will and proclamation of the Prophet Muhammad.

There came a point when the confrontation with the Quraysh over idolatry made it practically impossible for Muhammad and the rest of the Muslims to live in Mecca. Muhammad's clan, Hashim, was boycotted in an attempt to starve them into submission. This boycott is believed to have been the cause of Muhammad's wife's, Khadija, death. The persecution forced Muhammad and his people to accept an invitation of the pagan Arabs of the northern settlement Yathrib to emigrate there.

Yathrib, or Medina which the Muslims would later call it, had been torn by seemingly incurable confrontation and warfare between its various tribal groups, and they were willing to try the teachings of Muhammad to stabilize their region. There were three large Jewish tribes in the settlement, and with this, Yathrib had an introduction to the idea of monotheism, and were not as offended or against the denouncement and abolition of the pagan deities and idols, as were the Quraysh. Therefore, during the summer of 622 AD/ 4382 FTB, Muhammad and about seventy Muslims and their families set off for Yathrib. In the year before the Hajj, pilgrimage, to Medina, Muhammad had adapted His teachings to bring them closer to Judaism as he understood it. Muhammad's adaptation included a fast for Muslims on the Jewish day of Atonement and commanded Muslims to pray three times a day, instead of the twice a day formerly prescribed and practiced. Muslims could marry Jewish women and should observe some of the dietary laws. The most significant adaptation would be that Muslims must now pray facing Jerusalem like the Christians and the Jews. The Jews of Medina at first were willing to give Muhammad, his people, and his teachings a chance, due to the fact that life in Medina was close to intolerable and that Muhammad was so open and positively inclined towards their own faith. This lasted for a short period of time. Muhammad united the previously warring tribes of the region with his people into one new Muslim Ummah, or large tribe in which Jews were members as well. Some Jews of Medina saw their political position changing, and they became antagonistic against the new Muslims from Mecca and joined the pagan Arabs who were hostile towards Muhammad and his people. To an outsider, as an Arab would have been, seemingly there was little room for difference between the faiths of the Jews and Christians. Therefore to the Muslims, the divisions made it seem as though the followers of the Torah and the Gospel had introduced inauthentic elements into the Hanifiyyah, the pure religion of Abraham.

In January of 624 AD/ 4384 FTB, when it became clear that the hostility of some of the Jews in Medina was not subsiding, Muhammad and his teachings about Allah declared itself independent. This declaration included the decree for Muslims to now pray facing Mecca instead of Jerusalem. By this change in the direction of prayer (qibla), towards the Kabah, which was independent from the two older revelations, Muslims were declaring they belonged to no established religion or system, but were instead surrendering themselves to the Creator alone. They were not joining a sect that divided the indivisible religion of the Creator into groups intertwined in constant conflict. They were returning to the primordial religion of Abraham, who had been the first man to surrender to the Creator, therefore the first Muslim.

"Be Jews or Christians, and you shall be on the right path." Say: "nay, but (ours is) the creed of Abraham, who turned away from all that is false and was not of those who ascribe divinity to aught beside God." Say: "We believe in God and in that which has been bestowed upon Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and their descendants, and that which has been vouchsafed to Moses and Jesus, and that which has been vouchsafed to all Prophets by the Sustainer: we make no distinction between any of them, and it is unto him that we surrender ourselves." Quran 2: 135-36

The Quran teaches that all religious people have a duty to work for a just and equal society. This duty is not inherent to politics, but politics has come to be inherent to this duty and The Truth. Muhammad's mission was not of a political nature, but his teachings required politics to come in line with the Divine outline. Politics is not extrinsic to a Muslim's personal religious life. Muslims regard themselves as committed to implementing a just society in accord with the Creator's Will. The Ummah had sacramental importance to the Muslims, as a sign that Allah had blessed the endeavor to redeem humanity from oppression and injustice. According to the Quran, there is no compulsion in religion and it does not believe in forcing conversion to Islam on anyone. In the Quran, war is held to be abhorrent. The only just conflict is a conflict in the name of self-defense and sometimes to preserve decent values. The common misconception about Muhammad fighting to impose his teachings on others is not congruent with what actually occurred. In 630, the city of Mecca opened its gates to Muhammad and his teachings without conflict. In 632/ 4392 FTB, shortly before his death, Muhammad made the ancient Arabian pagan rite of the Hajj officially the fifth pillar of Islam. Muhammad died in June of 632 AD after a short illness, with brotherhood, social justice, and egalitarianism characterizing the legacy of his teachings, Islam.

Divisions in Islam began almost immediately after the death of Muhammad due to the lack of a covenant, or instructions of the continuation of the faith. There were instances of disagreement within the Muslim community. The first of these was with the initial position of leadership of the Muslims after Muhammad's sudden death. Muhammad's close friend, Abu Baker, was elected by the majority, but the others believed Muhammad would have chosen his cousin and son-in-law, Ali ibn Abi Talib, to be his successor. Ali himself accepted Abu Baker's selection for leadership. Ali became the fourth caliph in 656 AD, behind Umar ibn al-Khattab and Uthman ibn Affan. The Shiah would come to recognize Ali ibn Abi Talib as the first Imam, or leader of the Ummah. The

initial split of the Sunni's and the Shiah was of a political nature rather than doctrinal. This split heralded the importance of politics in Islam, including its conception of God. The Shiah-I-Ali (the Partisans of Ali) remained a minority and would develop a piety of protest, typified by the tragic figure of Muhammad's grandson, Husayn ibn Ali, who refused to accept the Ummayyads (who seized the caliphate after the death of his father Ali) and was killed with his small band of supporters by the Ummayyad Caliph Yazid in 680 AD in Karbala, what is modern day Iraq. He was a particular hero to the Shiah. The first four caliphs were concerned with spreading Islam among only the Arabs of the Byzantine and Persian empires, which were both in a state of decline. Under the Ummayyads, the expansion continued into Asia and North Africa, inspired not by religion as much as Arab imperialism. Although nobody in the new empire was forced to accept the Islamic faith. In fact, for a century after Muhammad's death, conversion was not encouraged, and around 700 AD, was actually forbidden by law. Muslims believed that Islam was for Arabs as Judaism was for the sons of Jacob. The Jews and Christians, or people of the book (ahl al-kitab), as they were referred to as, were granted religious liberty in the Muslim empire. When the Abbasid caliphs began to encourage conversion, many Semitic and Aryan peoples were eager to convert

After the period of the first four caliphs, the Rashidun, Muslims found themselves in a very different situation than their previous embattled society of Medina. They were now leaders of an expanding empire, and the leaders began to be motivated by worldliness and greed. This development led to an attempt by some Muslims to return to the original ideals of Muhammad and the first four rightly guided caliphs. This desire to return to the original teachings of Muhammad led to the formation of the Shariah law, which was a code similar to the Torah, based upon the Quran and the life and maxims of the Prophet Muhammad. A great number of oral traditions were in circulation about the words (hadiths) and practices (sunnahs) of Muhammad and his early companions. The Hadith, or collected maxims of Muhammad, are mostly concerned with everyday matters, but also with metaphysics, cosmology, and theology. A number of these are believed to be spoken by God himself to Muhammad. These sacred traditions emphasize the Creator's immanence and presence in the believer. One hadith lists the stages whereby a Muslim apprehends the divine presence, which seems almost incarnate in the believer. Apprehension begins by observing the commandments of the Quran and the Shariah and then progresses to voluntary acts of piety. The hadith goes as such; *"My servant draws near*

to me by means of nothing dearer to me than that which I have established as a duty to him. And my servant continues drawing nearer to me through supererogatory acts until I love him: and when I love him, I become his ear through which he hears, his eye with which he sees, and his hand with which he grasps and his foot whereon he walks."

These hadiths were collected during the eighth and ninth century by a number of editors. The idea behind this compilation of the words and actions of Muhammad was that since Muhammad was believed to have surrendered to God perfectly, therefore Muslims were to imitate him in their daily lives. By imitating and modeling themselves on the way Muhammad spoke, loved, ate, washed, and worshiped, it helped them live a life that was open to the Divine. This behavior was believed to develop an interior receptivity to the Creator in the individual who practiced it. An example of a Muslim Sunnah would be the greeting "*Salaam Alaykum*", peace be unto you. This is said when Muslims greet one another, and how Muhammad greeted his fellow Muslims. These external gestures are not regarded as ends themselves, but as means of acquiring the God consciousness, taqwa. These prescriptions, found in the Quran and practiced by the Prophet Muhammad consist of a constant remembrance of the Creator, the Divine system, and their individual and collective place within it, or Dhakir.

The Muslims that promoted this type of piety and lifestyle based on the imitation of Muhammad are generally known as the Ahl Al-Hadith, or the traditionist. They appealed to ordinary people, because of their fiercely egalitarian ethics and teachings. They opposed the luxury of the Ummayyads and the Abbasid courts, but were not in favor of the revolutionary tactics of the Shiah. They did not believe that the Caliph was required to have exceptional spiritual qualities, because they were simply a physical administrator of the faith. They also believed that by stressing the divine nature of the Quran and the Sunnahs, that each Muslim was provided with the means of direct contact with the Creator, and there was no need for a caste of priests to act as mediators. They believed each Muslim was responsible before the Creator for his or her own fate, therefore they should deal with the Creator themselves directly.

During the eighth and ninth century, an ascetical form of Islam had developed alongside the other sects. They attempted to return to a simpler life, like that of the early Muslims in Medina. This new breed of Muslim also had developed a distinct mystical tradition and social justice was crucial to their lives, beliefs, and teachings. Although the Ulama, Muslim leaders, were beginning to distinguish Islam from all other faiths,

singling it out as the one true faith, these social justice Muslims remained true to the original Quranic vision of the unity of all rightly guided faiths. Jesus was revered by many of these Muslims as the Prophet of the interior of life. Some even amended the Muslim profession of faith, the Shahadah, to say, "There is no God but Allah and Jesus is his messenger." These "new" Muslims, later to be associated with the term, Sufis, added the practice of fasting, night vigils, and the chanting divine names as mantra to the basic requirements of Muslim law.

Ideological divisions within Islam began in the twelfth century with the life and teachings of an Iranian Muslim named Yahya Suhrawardi, also referred to as the Sheikh Al-Ishraq, or Master of Illumination. He experienced and expressed the Creator in terms of Light. In Arabic, Ishraq refers to the light of dawn from the East and it also refers to the idea of enlightenment. The teachings of Suhrawardi proclaimed that all the Sages, Messengers, and Prophets of the ancient world had preached a single doctrine. This single doctrine was revealed by the Creator to Hermes, which correlates to Idris in the Quran and Enoch in the Bible. Then transmitted through the Greek world through Plato and Pythagoras, and through the Middle East by way of the Zoroastrian Magi, and through Aristotle. Since Aristotle, this doctrine has been obscured by a more narrowly intellectual and cerebral philosophy, but it has been secretly passed and kept alive. This perennial philosophy was mystical and imaginative, but did not abandon reason. Suhrawardi recognized the place of intelligent speculation, but also insisted on the importance of intuition in the approach to truth. According to Suhrawardi's teachings, human beings dimly remember their origin, feel uneasy in this world of shadow, and long to return to their first abode. His teachings claimed to help Muslims find their true orientation and purify the eternal wisdom within them. His complex system was an attempt to link all the religious insights of the world into one spiritual religion.

As the Quran teaches as well, Suhrawardi taught all Truth came from the Creator and should be sought wherever it could be found. Suhrawardi was put to death by the Ulama in Aleppo in 1191 AD. The teachings of Suhwardi were the true foundations of the mystical aspect of Islam now known as Sufism. The Sufi division from the rest of Islam was solidified with the life and teachings of Muid Ad-Din Ibn Al-Arabi (1165-1240 AD). He profoundly effected the Islamic perception of the Creator with his realizations and teachings. He referred to himself as a disciple of Khidr, a name given to the spiritual director of Moses in the Quran. While making circumambulations around the Kabah in 1201 AD/ 4961 FTB, Ibn Al-Arabi had an epiphany that made him realize that it would be

impossible for us to love a God we cannot actual know, because nothing we can conceive resembles the Creator. Yet, we can love the God we see in Its creations. There is no beauty or appreciation apart from the Creator, from the beauty in an individual to the beauty in a flower. Ibn Al-Arabi did not accept the idea that one single human being, no matter how holy, could express the infinite reality of the Creator. He believed that each individual was a unique Avatar, bringer of the message or will of the Divine. In his teachings, there is the conception of the Perfect Man, Insane I-Kamil, who embodied the mystery of the revealed Creator in each generation for the benefit of his contemporaries, although he did not incarnate the whole reality of the Creator. Muid Ad-Din Ibn Al-Arabi believed and proclaimed the Prophet Muhammad had been the Perfect Man of his generation. This introspective, imaginative mysticism was a search for the ground of being in the depths of the self. Since each man and woman had a unique experience with the Creator, then no one religion could express the whole of the Divine mystery. There was no objective truth about the Creator to which all must believe or prescribe to. Therefore, any consequent chauvinism or pride about one's own faith at the expense of other people was unacceptable, since no one faith had the whole truth about The Creator and the Divine System. Ibn Al-Arabi often used the phrase, "*the God created by the faiths,*" and proclaimed the man of God was equally at home in a synagogue, temple, church, and mosque, since all provided a valid apprehension of the Creator. During the twelfth and thirteenth century, Sufism ceased to be a minority movement and became the dominant Islamic mood in most of the empire. Sufi disciplines included the reciting of divine names as mantra to induce Dhikr, ecstasy, and concentrations with carefully prescribed breathing techniques and postures to help induce a sense of transcendence within the individual. These techniques helped people to experience the Creator as a presence within the self. Some Sufi orders used music and dancing to enhance concentration and induce this transcendence for worship. The most famous order as such was the Mawlawiyyah, whose members are known in the West as the Whirling Dervishes. Their stately and dignified dance was a method of concentration. As one spun around and around, the Sufi felt the boundaries of selfhood dissolve as they danced, giving a foretaste of the annihilation of fana, which is the Islamic concept of self.

THE BAB

Mirza Ali Muhammad is the given name to the individual now referred to as the Bab. He was born in Shiraz in the south of Persia on October 20, 1819 AD/ 5579 FTB. The Bab is believed to be a descendent of Muhammad, or a Siyyad. His father was a well-known merchant who died soon after his birth. He was then placed in the care of a maternal uncle, who also was a merchant of Shiraz, Haji Siyyad Ali. The Bab married at age twenty-two, and had one son who died while still an infant, in the first year of his mission. In his twenty-fifth year, in response to divine command, the Bab declared that, *"God the exalted had elected him to the station of Babhood."* The title of the Bab, which translated from the Arabic language would mean the Gate, was chosen because he considered himself *"the channel of grace for some great person still behind the veil of glory, who was the possessor of countless and boundless perfections, by whose will he moved, and to the bond whose love he clung."* In the days of The Bab, belief in the imminent appearance of a Divine Messenger was prevalent, especially among a sect of Muslims known as the Shaykhis.

The Bab first announced his mission to one distinguished member of the Shaykhis, Mulla Husayn Bushru'I, on May 23, 1844/ 5604 FTB. Abdul Baha, the son of Baha'ullah, who later becomes one of the most influential people of this existence, was born in the course of that same night. After some days of investigation and study, Mulla Husayn became convinced that the Bab was the messenger expected by his people. The rest of the Shaykhis soon accepted the Bab, and they began to known as Babi's. The main text of the teachings of the Bab was the Bayan. The Bab had eighteen disciples whom he sent to different parts of Persia and Turkistan to spread the word of his advent. The Bab himself set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca where he arrived in December 1844 AD, and openly declared his mission. On his return, there was great excitement about his mission, but the Shii doctors of the warped orthodox institutionalized Islam denounced him and persuaded the governor to undertake the suppression of the Bab's proclamations. The proclamations and teachings of the Bab dealt with the idea of Justice, as well as a general overhaul of the current state of society, which was run by the doctors of the Islamic faith. This began a long series of imprisonments, deportations,

examinations before tribunals, indignities, and persecution for the Bab and his followers. One of those persecuted followers was the individual who later becomes Baha'ullah. These types of persecutions are a common theme in the life of a Messenger and their followers. They culminated to the Bab's martyrdom in 1850 AD/ 5610 FTB. The ability of a scrutinizing seeker to be able to verify these events with outside third party historical means magnifies the power and significance of these occurrences, in particular the situation on the day of the Bab's martyrdom.

The importance of highlighting the existence and occurrences in the life of the Bab is that it supports the foundational Truth of the cycle of progressive revelation, and undeniably verifies the station of Baha'ullah. In The Bayan, the Bab speaks on his station, the concept of progressive revelation, and the coming of Baha'ullah,

"The purpose underlying this revelation, as well as those that preceded it, has...been to announce the advent of the faith of him whom God will make manifest... the process of the rise and settling of the sun of truth will thus indefinitely continue, a process that hath no beginning and will have no end."

The Bab

The existence of the Bab closely resembled the existence of John the Baptist. He claimed to be driven by the Spirit to proclaim a new day in the history of civilization. The Bab claimed to be the forerunner of the coming of a Divine Messenger, yet as John, he did not know whom or when the Messenger was to appear. The similarities of existences, station, and relationship of John the Baptist and Jesus and the Bab and Bahauallah is some of the firmest support for the Truth of the Divine cycle of Progressive Revelation a seeker will find upon the/ir investigation.

BAHAULLAH

Bahá'u'lláh taught that there is one Creator whose successive revelations of Its will to humanity have been the chief civilizing force in history. The primary agents of this process have been the Divine Messengers whom people have seen as the founders of separate religious systems, when in actuality these Messengers have been revealing correlative complementary information on the one religion of the Creator, or The Truth. The common purpose has been to bring the human race to spiritual and moral maturity. The phenomenon is an ever-recurring one, without beginning or end because it is fundamental to the evolutionary order itself. Although nurtured by the process, humanity has never understood it. People have constructed around each episode in their spiritual experience a separate religious system. Humanity has entered upon its collective coming of age, endowed with the capacity to see the entire panorama of its development as a single process. The challenge of collective maturity is to accept that we are one people, to free ourselves from the limited identities and creeds of the past, and together build the foundations of a peaceful global civilization. The power and blueprint for the building of this society is throughout the universal Word of God revealed in all the Messages of the past. One of the more powerful aspects of the teachings and life of Bahauallah is the fact that the occurrences of his existence occurred less than two hundred years ago and can be verified by third party, non-religious historical means. When one realizes the significance of one of the Messengers of the Creator being on this earth less than two hundred years ago for the specific purpose of bringing the civilization they are apart of to spiritual maturity, one realizes the responsibility and uniqueness of station we are in.

The mission of Bahauallah began with his birth in Tehran, Persia on November 9, 1817 AD/ 5587 FTB. The actual declaration of his mission through his teachings was in May of 1863 AD/ 5546 FTB. Bahauallah claimed to be a new independent Messenger of the Creator, whose life and mission parallel that of Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Muhammad. The message of Bahauallah is the most recent revelation of the Word and Will of the Creator for humanity. The essential message of Bahauallah and his teachings is unity. He taught that there is one Creator, one human race, and that all the world's religious systems have been stages in the revelation of the Creator's Will to humanity. Bahauallah speaking on the process of the revealing and

revealers of the will of the Creator states that, "*These sanctified mirrors, these day springs of ancient glory, are one and all the exponents on earth of him who is the central orb of the universe, its essence and ultimate purpose. From him proceed their knowledge and power, from him is derived their sovereignty.*" The teachings of Bahauallah include a Divine commentary on existence, as well as presenting the requirements and blueprints for the solutions to modern societies situations and problems. The basic initial requirements outlined by Bahauallah include the elimination of all forms of prejudice. The assurance of full equality of the sexes. The recognition of the unity and relativity of religious truth. The elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth. The realization of universal education. The establishment of a global commonwealth of nations. A sustainable balance between nature and technology. The establishment of a world federal system, based on collective security and the oneness of humanity. Each person accepting the responsibility to independently search for the/ir Truth, and recognizing that true religion is in harmony with reason and the pursuit of scientific knowledge. These are the requirements given by Bahauallah for our society to manifest the existences we are here to experience.

The original intent and purpose of this compilation of information was to present the original teachings of the Messengers in order to realign the true original teachings with the warped versions created throughout history or via religious institution or personal manipulation, and commonly practiced today. The absolute best way to present the original teachings of the Messengers is through the presentation of the Messengers actual words. Unfortunately our society possess very little of the original words and teachings of the most of the Messengers, although what we do possess is more than adequate for all individuals to be able come to the/ir truth. The following passages are a few of thousands of volumes of writings of Bahauallah, available to us as a society, which speak on all subjects relative to our current civilization and existence. These passages were chosen for presentation due to their content and the fact that there are few specific references to existence after death by the other Messengers. This subject as well as many others that were without answers until the most recent revelation are addressed in detail in the writings of Bahauallah. The following passages come from a text by the name of Gleanings, written by Bahauallah. These passages are good examples of the depth, relevancy, and power of the subjects covered in the teachings of Bahauallah.

LXXXI: And now concerning thy question regarding the soul of man and its survival after death. Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of ages and the centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world, can alter. It will endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His sovereignty, His Dominion and power will endure. It will manifest the signs of God and His attributes, and will reveal His loving-kindness and bounty. The movement of my Pen is stilled when it attempteth to befittingly describe the loftiness and glory of so exalted a station. The honour with which the Hand of Mercy will invest the soul is such as no tongue can adequately reveal. Blessed is the soul which, at the hour of its separation from the body, is sanctified from the vain imaginings of the peoples of the world. Such a soul liveth and moveth in accordance with the Will of its Creator, and entereth the all-highest Paradise. The Maids of Heaven, inmates of the loftiest mansion, will circle around it, and the Prophets of God and His chosen ones will seek its companionship. With them that soul will freely converse, and will recount unto them that which it hath been made to endure to the path of God, the Lord of all worlds. If any man be told that which hath been ordained for such a soul in the worlds of God, the Lord of the throne on high and of earth below, his whole being will instantly blaze out in his great longing to attain the most exalted, that sanctified and resplendent station.... The nature of the soul after death can never be described, nor is it meet and permissible to reveal its whole character to the eyes of men. The Prophets and messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High. The light which these souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its peoples. They are like unto leaven which leaveneth the world of being, and constitute the animating force through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest. Through them the clouds rain their bounty upon men, and the earth bringeth forth its fruits. All things must needs have a cause, a motive power, an animating principle. These souls and symbols of detachment have provided, and will continue to provide the supreme moving impulse in the world of being. The world beyond is as different from this world as this world is different from that of a child while still in the womb of its mother. When the soul attaineth the Presence of God, it will assume the form that best befiteth its immortality and is worthy of its celestial habitation. Such an existence is a contingent and not an absolute existence, inasmuch as the former is

preceded by a cause, whilst the latter is independent, thereof Absolute existence is strictly confined to God, exalted be His glory. Well is it with them that apprehend this truth. Wert thou to ponder in thine heart the behavior of the Prophets of God thou wouldest assuredly and readily testify that there must needs be other worlds besides this world. The majority of the truly wise and learned have throughout the ages, as it hath been recorded by the Pen of Glory in the Tablet of Wisdom, borne witness to the truth of that which the holy Writ of God hath revealed. Even the materialists have testified in their writings to the wisdom of these divinely-appointed Messengers, and have regarded the references made by the Prophets to Paradise, to hell fire, to future reward and punishment, to have been actuated by a desire to educate and uplift the souls of men. Consider, therefore, how the generality of mankind, whatever their beliefs or theories, have recognized the excellence, and admitted the superiority, of these Prophets of God. These Gems of Detachment are acclaimed by some as the embodiments of wisdom, while others believe them to be the mouthpiece of God Himself. How could such Souls have consented to surrender themselves unto their enemies if they believed all the worlds of God to have been reduced to this earthly life? Would they have willingly suffered such afflictions and torments as no man hath ever experienced or witnessed?

LXXXVI: And now concerning thy question whether human souls continue to be conscious one of another after their separation from the body. Know thou that the souls of the people of Baha (God), who have entered and been established within the Crimson Ark, shall associate and commune intimately one with another, and shall be so closely associated in their lives, their aspirations, their aims and strivings as to be even as one soul. They are indeed the ones who are well informed, who are keen-sighted, and who are endured with understanding. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. The People of Baha, who are the inmates of the Ark of God, are one and all, well aware of one another's state and condition, and are united in the bonds of intimacy and fellowship. Such a state however must depend upon their faith and their conduct. They that are of the same grade and station are fully aware of one another's capacity, character, accomplishments and merits. They that are of a lower grade, however, are incapable of comprehending adequately the station, or of estimating the merits, of those that rank above them. Each shall receive his share from thy Lord. Blessed is the man that hath turned his face towards God, and walked steadfastly in His love, until his soul hath winged its flight unto God, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Most Powerful, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-

Merciful. The souls of the infidels, however shall and to this I bear witness and when breathing their last be made aware of the good things that have escaped them, and shall bemoan their plight, and shall humble themselves before God. They shall continue doing so after the separation of their souls from their bodies. It is clear and evident that all men shall, after their physical death, estimate the worth of their deeds, and realize all that their hands have wrought. I swear by the Day-Star that shineth above the horizon of Divine power! They that are the followers of the one true God shall, the moment they depart out of this life, experience such joy and gladness as would be impossible to describe, while they that live in error shall be seized with such fear and trembling, and shall be filled with such consternation, as nothing can exceed. Well is it with him that hath quaffed the choice and incorruptible wine of faith through the gracious favor and the manifold bounties of Him Who is the lord of all Faiths.

LXXXII: Thou hast asked Me concerning the nature of the soul. Know, verily, that the soul is a sign of God, a heavenly gem whose reality the most learned of men hath failed to grasp, and whose mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel. It is the first among all created things to declare the excellence of its creator, the first to recognize His glory, to cleave to His truth, and to bow down in adoration before Him. If it be faithful to God, it will reflect His light, and will eventually return to Him. If it fail, however, in its allegiance to its Creator, it will become a victim to self and passion, and will in the end, sink in their depths...It is in itself, a testimony that beareth witness to the existence of a world that is contingent, as well as to the reality of a world that hath neither beginning nor end.

LXXXIV- Regard thou the one true God as One Who is apart from and immeasurably exalted above all created things. The whole universe reflecteth His glory, while He is Himself independent of, and transcendeth His creatures. This is the true definition of Divine unity. He Who is The Eternal Truth is the one Power Who exerciseth undisputed sovereignty over the world of being. Whose image is reflected in the mirror of the entire creation. All existence is dependent upon Him, and from Him is derived the source of the sustenance of all things. This is what is meant by Divine unity, this is its fundamental principle...He is a true believer in Divine unity who, far from confusing duality with oneness, refuses to allow any notion of multiplicity to becloud his conception of the singleness of God, who will regard the Divine Being as One Who, by His very nature transcendeth the limitations of numbers.

BASIC TEACHINGS OF BAHAUULLAH

- There is one Creator whose successive revelations of His will to humanity have been the chief civilizing force in history, and the primary agents of this process have been the Divine Messengers
 - Acknowledges and confirms the station and message of the other Messengers
- The basic initial requirements outlined by Bahauullah necessary to create existence as it should be:
- The elimination of all forms of prejudice.
 - The assurance of full equality of the sexes.
 - The recognition of the unity and relativity of religious truth.
 - The elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth.
 - The realization of universal education.
 - The establishment of a global commonwealth of nations.
 - A sustainable balance between nature and technology.
 - The establishment of a world federal system, based on collective security and the oneness of humanity.
 - Each person accepting the responsibility to independently search for the/ir Truth, and recognizing that true religion is in harmony with reason and the pursuit of scientific knowledge.
 - Bahá'u'lláh clearly affirms the deep connection between the practical and spiritual dimensions of human existence.
 - The creation of social structures that promote the development of both individual and collective capacities, with capacities of the mind and spirit receiving particular emphasis
 - The attainment of knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual perception should be the central object of human endeavor.
 - The pursuit of arts, crafts, activeness and sciences uplift the world of being, and are conducive to its exaltation
 - In all things humanity must seek the Middle Way, for whatsoever passeth beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence.

THE BEGINNING

Adam
3761 bc /
1 ftb
Garden of Eden/Africa
Bible
Sefir Yetzirah
*Be fruitful and multiply
*Do not eat from tree of knowledge

KABBALAH

Abraham
2000 bc-1800 bc/
1700-1900 ftb
Africa/Middle East
Zohar, Bible, Sefir Yetzirah
Talmud, Raziel, Torah
*The universe operates according to certain supremely powerful principles
*Having a constant realization of your place in this unitary system
*Existence is about changing our nature, specifically desiring for the self alone, to desiring for the sake of sharing

HINDUISM

Krishna
2000 bc-1800 bc /
1700-1900 ftb
India
Rg Veda, Upanishads
Bhagavad Gita
*Assume the revelation of the Veda
*Claim to have liberation as their purpose
*Recognize interconnectedness of all creation
*Assume a transcendent reality
*Offer systematic explanations and interpretations
*Utilize the six means of valid knowledge; perception, inference verbal authority, analogy presumption, non-apprehension

JUDAISM

Moses
1500 bc-1200 bc /
2300-2600 ftb
Africa, Israel, Middle East
Torah, Bible, Midrash, 10 Commandments
*Love thy neighbor as thyself
* refer to the Ten Commandments

ZOROASTRIANISM

Zoroaster
1500 bc-1000 bc /
2300-2800 ftb
Persia (Iran, Iraq)
Zend Avesta
Gathas
*Zoroastrianism stresses monotheism, while recognizing the universal sway of two opposite forces
*Good thoughts, Good words, Good deeds
*Asceticism and celibacy are condemned
*Purity and avoidance of defilement are valued in order to combat evil, and one must at all times oppose the forces of evil & those who side with it

BUDDHISM

Gautama Siddhartha
545 bc /
3245 ftb
India
Triptaka, Dharmapada, Anguttara-Nikaya
*The purpose and goal of existence is attaining the state of Nirvana, the end of suffering
*In this world of suffering, only one thing is stable and firm, Dharma, truth about right living
*The sense of bliss and transcendence experienced during meditation is natural and can be attained by anyone living a right existence
Four Noble Truths
I. The Truth of suffering
II. The Truth of the origin of suffering, desire
III. The Truth of cessation of suffering, cessation of desire, detachment
IV. The Truth of the path to ending suffering, The Noble Eightfold Path: right belief, right thought, right speech, right action, livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and meditation. The path to the attainment of Nirvana

CONFUCIANISM

Confucius
500 bc /
3290 ftb
China
Analects, Great Learning and Mencius
*Urged individuals to strive for perfect virtue, righteousness, and improvement of character
*Taught the importance of harmony in the family, order in the state, and peace in the empire
*Teachings focus more on human beings and their achievements, human duty, and the idea of a transcendent existence, rather than on a divine or unknowable reality
*The ultimate goal is individual happiness. Necessary conditions to achieve individual happiness is the establishment of peace with all other human beings

CHRISTIANITY

Jesus (John the Baptist)
0 bc
3761 ftb
Israel, Middle East
Bible
Quran
*Teachings emphasize love, fellowship, and compassion with and for all people
*Doing unto others as you would have them do unto you
*Live with faith for ascension and eternal life

ISLAM

Muhammad
620 ad /
4381 ftb
Persia, Middle East
Quran
*Teaches that there is one Creator, or God and all rightly guided religions derive from there alone
*Teaches that all religious people have a duty to work for a just and equal society and to make unity thr driving factor in their life and society
*Emphasizes the absolute moral and spiritual equality of the sexes, and gave women legal rights of inheritance and divorce
*Emphasized that specific religious prescriptions were not ground in any divine necessity, and prescribed to specific groups for their particular situation

BAHAI TEACHINGS

Bahaulah (The Bab)
1863 ad /
5703 ftb
Persia, Middle East
Kitab i' Iqan / Aqudas
Seven/Four Valleys
*Teaches that there is one Creator whose successive revelations of its will to humanity have been the chief civilizing force in history and the primary agents for this process have been the Divine Messengers
*Acknowledges and confirms the station and messages of the other Messengers
*Elimination of all forms of prejudice and discrimination
*Assurance of full equality of the sexes
*Recognition of the unity and relativity of religious truth
*Elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth
*Realization of universal education
*Establishment of a global commonwealth of nations
*Sustainable balance between nature and technology and the unity of science and religion
*Establishment of a world federal system based on collective security and the oneness of humanity and Creation

CONCLUSION

This compilation was intended to present the basic principles and histories of the before presented belief systems. The information is intended to inform using the original foundational teachings of the major Messengers, The Truth. The essential intent is to aid and entreat the seeker to seek out the/ir answers and direction in the Revelations of the Creator available to society, and briefly summarized here. Although investigation for the individual themselves is necessary and essential, the following summaries basically cover the primary panorama of the revealed word to humankind and adequately serves as a valid reference. The time, place, or even the Messenger themselves is not the most important aspect of the information. The important realization is that the Creator has revealed a basic, broad outline to how we are to exist, and that by being in accord with that outline we are able to experience fulfillment. This outline is presented and echoed by all of the Messengers mentioned in this text, and therefore should serve as validation for these basic Divine Principles. If we as the conscious collective continue to live within the restraints created by the consciousnesses and systems we currently have in place, then unfortunately we have no one to blame but ourselves.

So what are we going to do? Are we going to stand up and demand that the institutions which regulate our existences be changed to more resemble what we know to be right? Are we going to continue to allow the desires and behaviors of a minute percentage of our population to dictate our existences and the way the rest of existence views and treats us? Are we going to continue to live an existence we know not to be right? If I even have to ask questions of that nature, then we know we have some work to do to bring about some Change. The Change we desire and know to be better is ironically waiting for us. Principally, in a system like ours, Democracy, it is the rule of the people. We do have the power. The power to bring about Change.

AFTERWORD

After finally getting to a point to look at this project in unitary physically finished totality, I have a few thoughts that I would like to share with you, the reader, that developed within me throughout this process and have culminated to a few final overarching thoughts. Looking at the text, I realize that this information is going to be of little interest to an individual who has not, is not, or about to begin seeking. I define seeking as, having a desire to know more about your personal and this collective existence. I began this project with a zest and expectation that, anyone who is of right mind should be able to recognize that there is some sort of Creator or beginning point for all that we are able to conceive, and that most all individuals can or have realized that there are commonalities between all individuals and that these commonalities ultimately connect us. I still do believe that people should be able to recognize that there is a better way to exist, but I also have a different perspective that I did not have at the onset of this project.

Throughout this text I speak of Change, and the realization that the way we are collectively existing is off in some way. The idea of this existence being of a unitary nature, that humans are spiritual beings having a physical experience, and this existence being primarily of a spiritual nature are ideas stated throughout the text. With things of a spiritual nature being wholly good, and the Source of all Creation, The Creator, Light, God, whatever label you choose, is all good as well, then one must infer that Creation itself must be composed of mostly good as well. Now, this last point presents somewhat of a contradiction. If we as part of Creation are composed and connected to so much good, how can I be calling for so much Change to something that is composed of so much good. Who am I personally, and we as human beings to be changing what is supposed to be created and composed of so much good?

Well, to be honest with you, that question is perplexing me at the time of the creation of these very words you are reading. I do not know if this is the way the system is set up for us to exist. I guess we would have to have some individuals who need help in order to give other individuals the opportunity to help and service, which we know to be one of the better experiences in this existence. I guess in order to be a distinction from those who know and believe, there must be those who do not know and believe. Regardless of my uncertainty, I do not think that asking for all individuals to have the ability to live and experience their existence to the fullest extent

of their capacities is some grand expectation and task, which some individual I have presented this text to have thought it to be. A just society does not have to be a utopia. It must be built upon principles of rightness, fairness and with the consciousness of the recognition of the Truth. Being a good person, running a fair business, not impeding anyone else's path of existence, and having a realization of your place in this unitary existence, to me is not asking too much of society to practice and implement as our collective existence.

If in fact it turns out that we must have the contingencies of happiness and suffering, some that have and some that do not, I now have the acceptance within me to give its existence a possibility. I also now possess the realization that, at the very least, this project has made me personally a better person. And by me being a consciousness individual, I make the world a better place, because every interaction I have will be with the right consciousness and positive intent. Honestly, that realization was difficult for me to accept, but one I know to be the Truth. So, as another individual finds the/ir Truth and another, and so on, I guess the world will progressively become a place with more people of a better nature, and that may very well be the way this existence is suppose to be. If that is the situation, then the only responsibility an individual has is to truly investigate what the/ir existence is about and suppose to be. When an individual begins to seek the/ir answers, then they will begin to find the/ir answers. When an individual begins searching, they begin being an individual of a better nature and they have done their part. Once they have done this, it no longer is about doing anything, it is just existing. And from this community of just existences...

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"As members of this current society and world community, we are at a point of time when we can objectively look at the entire panorama of human existence, culture, and behavior. With this station and ability comes a responsibility. With our period's unique tools of history, science, experience, all recorded Revelation of the Creator, and personal inference, we have a responsibility to consciously Individually Investigate The Truth about our personal and our collective existence, and continue the advancement of human civilization. This is the time of spiritual maturity in the cycle of human existence, and the manifestation and attainment of things of a physical nature is not going to advance us anywhere. The focus must shift towards the attainment of knowledge of the Divine System and the attainment of spiritual attributes. This shift will be the catalyst for the advancement of the human experience."

Cedric Watkins
Compiler of Individual Investigation of the Truth