

# Materials by Ronald Tomanio

## Originally on GeoCities



### How to Improve Difficult Relationships by Ronald Tomanio

#### A "Food for the Spirit" Project

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[Note: Ronnie has given a workshop which covered one of these steps each day for five days. You may wish to read only one step at a time and think about only that step for at least one entire day before reading the next step.--Laurie]

*This should be in the category of "if it helps me great, if not throw it away." It is also important for you to individualize the exercise -- make it your own.*

#### ● Step One:

Keep a journal of your perceptions of this individual throughout the exercise. I advise keeping this totally private. **Sincerely pray for the person, their well-being, their happiness.**

#### ● Step Two:

Step Two begins when you are able to do Step One. Some of these difficult relationships have lasted 30 or 40 years. It's going to take time. See yourself as a servant of God, a soul progressing towards God for all eternity. Now, once again, **pray for the well-being and happiness of the person.**

#### ● Step Three:

Again, no rush, take your time. If you are a servant of God, a soul progressing towards God for all eternity, that is also true of the other person. **So now we have one servant of God praying for another servant of God in a sincere, pure-hearted manner for their well-being and happiness.**

In the classroom, I built this exercise day by day, remember this is at its roots, a spiritual exercise that flowers in the outer material world. Do not be concerned about time.

#### ● Step Four:

**You must perform acts of pure-hearted servitude or at least that is your desire for this person.** Do not tell anyone especially the person. They do not have to be monumental acts only monumental in their purity. Remember this is where the power lies. If a servant of God is

fulfilling his or her purpose then the power of God can enter this world through those acts of servitude. They are doorways so to speak.

#### ● Step Five:

Remember, only you can decide when to pause or continue on in this journey. You are almost at the stage when you are ready to let the healing process emerge into the intellectual world where you would want to verbalize. BUT you must pay what I call "'Abdu'l-Bahá's\* price." You must not see an enemy and treat him as a friend for that would be mere tolerance which is hypocrisy. **You must genuinely love this person on the level of soul to soul.** If you can do that, and that's a big IF, open your mouth but be prepared for what comes out. It will shock you as well as the other person.

Let's look at what brought you to the point of needing this exercise: You could not deal with even the physical sighting of this person without negative emotions. Their personality drives you nuts. Therefore, you were forced, like a flood victim, to seek higher ground to survive. You found that you could, with the aid of God, relate to that person as a fellow servant of God and a new relationship was formed based on the oneness of mankind and the universal servitude that implies.

Wouldn't it be so much better if we started out relating to people on the highest level of soul to soul rather than on the lowest mechanical level of personality to personality. If, recognizing that we will naturally clash with each other's personalities might we not find that "clashing" is an opportunity for us to understand that we need to relate to each other as soul to soul. This avoids a lot of trouble and grief. Of course, if you happen to hit it off with someone's personality, you are free to enjoy this as well, but our first response to anyone must be as a servant of god to another servant of God.

One of the by-products of this exercise is that you will develop deeper friendships because a friendship without spiritual roots gets blown away with the first gust of wind. \*'Abdu'l-Bahá was the son of the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh.

*"The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed." --C.G. Jung*



## Increasing the Faculty of Inner Vision by Ronald Tomanio

### A "Food for the Spirit" Project

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*"O Man of two visions! Close one eye and open the other. Close one to the world and all that is therein and open the other to the hallowed beauty of the beloved." --Bahá'u'lláh,*

## 1. Increasing Inner Vision

[Note: Ronnie has referenced excellent quotes from the writings and I have added links to them throughout the text instead of footnotes as they were originally presented. So PLEASE click on all underlined hyperlinks to get the full text of this article. Thanks, Laurie]

### A Daily Exercise Designed to Increase the Efficiency of the [Faculty of Inner Vision](#) by Ronald Tomanio

Imagine going through life with one arm tied behind your back. Every once in a while you untie the unused arm and use it for a minute, then quickly tie it back up again. As you can image, this is not very efficient.

Just as we have two arms to work with, we have two ways of [comprehending](#), but we have been trained in the use of only one.

Western society has concentrated on the development of our logical reasoning power but has virtually ignored the development of our knowing power. This exercise is an attempt to bring balance back into our lives by showing us how to use our knowing power.

#### 🔴Step One:

Temporarily stop the use of the analytical reasoning process and [quiet the mind](#).

Quieting the mind simply means letting go of thoughts; *i.e.*, let them pass without your attention attaching to them or them impacting on you.

Visualize sitting on the banks of a stream after a storm. Various objects float by: a branch, some leaves, an old board. Let them float by and make no attempt to pick them up. I have enclosed a [separate sheet](#) with additional information if you need further help in quieting your mind. If not, march onward.

#### 🔴Step Two:

When you know your mind is quiet, you are ready to "ask your spirit a question."

*"It is an axiomatic fact that while you meditate you are speaking with your own spirit and the spirit answers: The light breaks forth and the reality is revealed."*

*--'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p.174*

Notice the word "if" does not appear in the above quote. You ask the question and you get an answer.

By asking your questions, you are using the faculty of meditation. The purpose of this faculty is to put forth the questions and facilitate the inner consultation between the faculty of your mind and the faculty of your inner vision.

### • Step Three:

Listen for the answer. The source of this inspiration and the intuitive wisdom that flows through our faculty of inner vision to our immediate consciousness is God through the Manifestation. This quote [['Abdu'l-Bahá, \*Some Answered Questions\*, p. 253](#)] is so startling that, even though it is long, I must include in its entirety.

By studying the [following] quote you will discover where your reasoning powers of comprehension come from and where your knowing powers of comprehension come from:

*"If the wayfarer's goal be the dwelling of the Praiseworthy One (Mahmud), this is the station of primal reason which is known as the Prophet and the Most Great Pillar. Here reason signifieth the divine, universal mind, whose sovereignty enlighteneth all created things..."--Bahá'u'lláh, *Seven Valleys & Four Valleys*, p.52*

In the classroom, I built this exercise day by day, remember this is at its roots, a spiritual exercise that flowers in the outer material world. Do not be concerned about time.

### • Step Four:

Make sure the answer you have received is in harmony with the Sacred Writings.

Remember you are not infallible. If you receive inspiration that you are the next Manifestation of God, you know, as a Bahá'í that this is idle fancies and vain imaginings.

There is such a feeling of safety living within the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. You don't need to waste ten years of your life following an "inspiration" down a dark dead-end alley. Simply take one second and toss it into the garbage can marked "ego."

I don't think it is a coincidence that at the same time we have all of this incredible knowledge about the soul, we have been given an unbreakable covenant in which we can experiment safely with this knowledge.

### • Step Five:

After the mind is convinced that the inspiration received from the faculty of inner vision is in accord with the Sacred Writings, it is important that some act of service to humanity must be performed. You are also a card carrying member of humanity. Therefore the act of service may be purely personal. A true act of service in the outer world fits like a glove on inspiration from the inner world. This becomes another safety check to make sure you are going in the right direction.

A painter creates a vision of staggering beauty. A poet assembles words as grand as the pyramids. A musician creates a song that will be sung all over the world and beyond his lifetime. What must they all do next?

## Step Six:

Say prayers of praise and gratitude to God for this divine gift, and also pray for your own humility with the knowledge you now know where these wonders come from. This also contributes to a sincere listening attitude which is needed to receive more inspiration. After all, an ego maniac has no need to listen to anyone else.

I want to try and sum up. If we learn to use both our reasoning power and knowing power in a harmonious fashion, we will solve our problems quicker and more easily. We will have fewer times in our lives when we seem to exist in a world of negative emotions. The quality of our lives will improve dramatically and we will perform great acts of service to humanity.

Not everyone can be a great musician, poet or artist but we can all infuse our lives with creativity derived from our faculty of inner vision. There are as many avenues of creativity as there are human beings.

I have one word of warning. Start using these wondrous powers of the soul and you better be prepared for a truly exciting life.

My thanks to Henry Weil for his books: *Closer than your Life's Vein* and *Drops from the Ocean*. Also, thanks to Sissy Weil for sending me additional materials.

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## The Spirit of Faith

### A "Food for the Spirit" Project

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*"The greatest power in the realm and range of human existence is spirit - the divine breath which animates and pervades all things." -- 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 58)*

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## The Spirit of Faith What is It? by Ronald Tomanio

*"The fourth degree of spirit is the heavenly spirit; it is the spirit of faith and the bounty of God; it comes from the breath of the Holy Spirit, and by the divine power it becomes the **cause of eternal life**. It is the power which makes the **earthly man heavenly**, and the **imperfect man perfect**. It makes the **impure to***

*be pure, the silent eloquent; it purifies and sanctifies those made captive by carnal desires; it makes the ignorant wise." -- `Abdu'l-Bahá ([emphasis added] Some Answered Questions, pages 144-145)*

### **Step One:**

Make a list of what this incredible divine power makes possible in **your** life.

### **Step Two:**

Make a list of your deepest spiritual desires. If the Step One List and the Step Two List are similar and compatible, continue with the exercise.

Please read carefully the following very powerful quotation. A Manifestation of God, as interpreted by `Abdu'l-Bahá, declares a person dead if he is not animated by the spirit of faith.

*". . . as is clearly indicated in the Gospel where it says: 'Let the dead bury their dead;' . . . inasmuch as he who would bury these dead was alive with the vegetative, animal and rational human soul, yet did Christ - to whom be glory! - declare such dead and devoid of life, in that this person was devoid of the spirit of faith . . ." -- `Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'í World Faith, pages 370-371)*

Hopefully, at this point, you have been convinced that you need this animating divine power in your life. Now, let's spend a little time understanding the difference between a person animated only by the human spirit and someone who is also animated by the spirit of faith.

*"But the human spirit, unless assisted by the spirit of faith, does not become acquainted with the divine secrets and the heavenly realities. It is like a mirror which, although clear, polished and brilliant, is still in need of light. Until a ray of the sun reflects upon it, it cannot discover the heavenly secrets."*

*". . . the mind is the power of the human spirit." -- `Abdu'l-Bahá (Some Answered Questions, pages 208-209)*

### **Step Three:**

Take a "divine secret" or a "heavenly reality" such as an attribute of God -- love or justice or mercy. Now visualize an iceberg with only a small portion of its reality visible above the water. We know that most of the iceberg is not perceptible to the human eye.

Clearly we all want to see more of the "iceberg" but only when the human mind is bathed in the light of the spirit of faith can we begin to see what is hidden from our spiritual eyes.

How do we obtain the spirit of faith? In short, obedience to God.

*"The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him*

*Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth everyone who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration." --Bahá'u'lláh (The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, page 19)*

We see that faith and obedience are inseparably linked.

But is it simply a cut and dried mechanical act of knowing what the law is and obeying? Sometimes yes and sometimes it gets a little more complicated.

*"Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power."  
--Bahá'u'lláh (The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, page 21)*

There is also the matter of being faithful to the Covenant. I believe this entails more than knowing the history dates about when who succeeded whom. For example, believing in Bahá'u'lláh also means believing in the world of the Manifestation. When you react to a Manifestation of God, you are also reacting to the powers and characteristics of that world.

You know that Bahá'u'lláh is infallible and that you are **not**. Does that not push you in a healthy direction where you are more likely to choose humility instead of arrogance? Are you not more likely to be someone who chooses to be a servant of God who engages in pure-hearted consultation rather than someone who believes and acts like a divine institution?

To sum up: Make the right reactions. Reactions that are in harmony with reality, that are in harmony with the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and those reactions allow you to receive the spirit of faith emanating from God.

It all comes down to the 4 choices we make and `Abdu'l-Bahá has told us that the only choices we can control are our own moral choices.

*"Some things are subject to the free will of man, such as justice, equity, tyranny and injustice, in other words, good and evil actions; it is evident and clear that these actions are, for the most part, left to the will of man. But there are certain things to which man is forced and compelled, such as sleep, death, sickness, decline of power, injuries and misfortunes; these are not subject to the will of man, and he is not responsible for them, for he is compelled to endure them. But in the choice of good and bad actions he is free, and he commits them according to his own will." --`Abdu'l-Bahá (Some Answered Questions, page 248)*

I have a practical suggestion.

## Step Four:

Take a law or a spiritual principle that you have no trouble with. Go beyond mere compliance. Submit your whole being to it. make this a **conscious** choice. Visualize yourself with your arms open, welcoming the outpourings of the spirit of faith from God. Over time, with the aid of the spirit of faith, you will find that the "heavenly mysteries" will be made known to you and the wisdom of laws and ordinances that once eluded you and that you had trouble obeying will be easily understood. Remember this is an eternal process that never ends, so the "steed of this valley is patience."

## In Conclusion:

When you make choices that are in harmony with the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, you are gradually being born in the world of the spirit. The accumulation of those choices results in the knowledge of your true self, the unfoldment of your unique individuality.

*"If the travelers seek after the goal of the Intended One (Maqsud), this station appertaineth to the self - but that self which is 'The Self of God standing within Him with laws.'" Bahá'u'lláh (Seven Valleys and Four Valleys, page 50)*

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## Purpose By Ronald Tomanio

### A "Food for the Spirit" Project

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*"O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and **reveal to them Thy great purpose**. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor; and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God! Leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord." -- Bahá'u'lláh, Baha'i Prayers, p.202 (emphasis added)*

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*"But in our concern for such immediate obvious calls upon our succor we must not allow ourselves to forget the continuing, appalling burden of suffering under which millions of human beings are always groaning -- a burden which they have borne for century upon century and which it is the mission of Bahá'u'lláh to lift at last. The principal cause of this suffering, which one can witness wherever one turns, is the corruption of human morals and the prevalence of prejudice, suspicion, hatred, untrustworthiness, selfishness and tyranny among men. It is not merely material well-being that people need. **What they desperately need is to know how to live their lives -- they need to know who they are, to what purpose they exist, and how they should act towards one another; and, once they know the answers to these***



*questions they need to be helped to gradually apply these answers to everyday behavior." Universal House of Justice, 19 November 1974, Letter to the NSA of Italy (emphasis added)*

## ● Purpose and Power

**When we are given divine purposes, we are given the power to achieve those purposes.**

*"We have assigned to every end a means for its accomplishment;" -- Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, 160*

*"Be not dismayed, O peoples of the world, when the day-star of My beauty is set, and the heaven of My tabernacle is concealed from your eyes. Arise to further My Cause, and to exalt My Word amongst men. We are with you at all times, and shall strengthen you through the power of truth. We are truly almighty. Whoso hath recognized Me will arise and serve Me with such determination that the powers of earth and heaven shall be unable to defeat his purpose." -- Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 32-33*

There is a relationship between being in harmony with divine purposes and the attributes of God. We are promised that the power to achieve our God-given purposes will be forthcoming. Who among us hasn't experienced a surge of courage that overwhelmed our fear of giving a fireside and then wondered when we opened our mouths where all that wisdom came from.

*"At all times we must look at the greatness of the Cause, and remember that Bahá'u'lláh will assist all who arise in His service. When we look at ourselves, we are sure to feel discouraged by our shortcomings and insignificance!" -- Shoghi Effendi, Guidelines for Teaching, p. 316.*

*"that our struggles as individuals, often handicapped by the sense of our own inadequacy, are reinforced by the grace of Bahá'u'lláh, Who enables us to achieve the seemingly impossible!" -- Shoghi Effendi, Unfolding Destiny, p. 392*

*"The source of courage and power is the promotion of the Word of God, and steadfastness in His Love." -- Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 156*

There is a tremendous source of courage when you are trying to have divine purposes rule your life. This is courage that you can then take and use to work through relationships with individuals or institutions which you might have previously avoided because you felt you couldn't do it.

All you need to do is attempt to fulfill your purposes and the power to do so is supplied by God. Take the first step!

## ● Purpose and Reality

**There is a clear connection between purpose and reality.**

*"A detailed and exact knowledge of the present structure of Bahá'i Administration, or of the By-laws of National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, or of the many and*

*varied applications of Bahá'í law under the diverse conditions prevailing around the world, while valuable in itself, cannot be regarded as the sort of knowledge primarily intended by deepening. Rather is suggested a clearer apprehension of the purpose of God for man, and particularly of His immediate purpose as revealed and directed by Bahá'u'lláh, a purpose as far removed from current concepts of human well-being and happiness as is possible." -- The Universal House of Justice, Ridvan Letter 1967*

Let's see what Dr. Daniel C. Jordan, a noted educator, had to say about our need to know our purpose: *"If one is out of touch with the purpose of something, he is out of touch with the reality of that thing. What happens then if a human being is out of touch with his reality because he does not understand his purpose? He becomes self-alienated -- a word which has become popular as a description of mental illness. One who is self-alienated does not know who he is or where he is going. If one does not know who he is or where he is going, he is going to be upset. Moreover, one's relationships to other human beings will be disturbed because he will feel impelled to cling to the people around him and impose himself on them; and he will be unable to assume responsibility for himself or for others."* (*The Meaning of Deepening*, p. 13)

Let's consider a practical example of what we are talking about. Say a car is abandoned on the side of the road on some very remote island that still has inhabitants who have never before seen a car. When one of these people finds the car, he might think, 'This would be a great place for me to live and keep my stuff.' He would open the door and climb in. Eventually, the steering wheel would get to him. He might decide that it was interfering with his efficient use of the car and tear it out and throw it away. As time passes, he would find the trunk, which would be more great space to keep his stuff. But, when he finds the engine, again it would be space full of useless metal that wasn't allowing room for his growing family and their stuff so he might rip it out. There are two consequences in this situation that it would probably be best to avoid: 1) you did not receive the full benefit of the car because you were out of touch with its purpose and 2) also, because you were out of touch with its purpose, the car was not allowed to reach its full potential.

While this may seem a silly example, if you equate the concepts to human situations, to servants of God, you can see that there are far more serious consequences. We are defined in terms of purpose.

*"Know that the conditions of existence are limited to the conditions of servitude, of prophethood and of Deity,...." -- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p.230*

Notice that when 'Abdu'l-Bahá categorizes the human condition, He doesn't say, "Diety, Prophethood and humanity, or souls or human beings." He defines our reality in terms of our purpose! We immediately comprehend that our true selves will emerge after the journeying on the path of servitude.

If we are out of touch with our purpose as servants of God, then we are out of touch with our true selves. If we do not know who we are, we cannot connect with the true selves of others or with the reality of the divine institutions.

## ● Purpose and Mind

**The reason purpose is so critical to understanding our identity and the world around us has to do with how our mind works.**

*"Know that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of the essence of a thing and the knowledge of its qualities. The essence of a thing is known through its qualities; otherwise, it is unknown and hidden.*

As our knowledge of things, even of created and limited things, is knowledge of their qualities and not of their essence, how is it possible to comprehend in its essence the Divine Reality, which is unlimited? For the inner essence of anything is not comprehended, but only its qualities. For example, the inner essence of the sun is unknown, but is understood by its qualities, which are heat and light. The inner essence of man is unknown and not evident, but by its qualities it is characterized and known." -- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 220

Picture an iceberg in your mind. We know most of the reality of the iceberg is unseen beneath the surface of the water.

Qualities/purpose = (Iceberg above the waterline)  
Unseen essence = (Iceberg below the waterline)

We have learned some basic facts about the concept of purpose. Let's examine how the knowledge can improve the qualities of our own life and our relationships. After all, that is the purpose of these exercises.

Let's look at the Writings with the concept of purpose fresh in our minds.

*"O Thou Whose tests are a healing medicine to such as are nigh unto Thee,..." -- Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations, p. 220*

1. "O Thou" (God) -- we cannot know God.
2. "tests" -- since we are not infallible, we can never be sure what the specific reason for the test is.
3. "such" (me, you) we are souls, a mystery the mind of no one can fathom.

This reminds me of an algebra nightmare I had in high school:  $XXY + Z = 42$  and I don't know the value of X, Y or Z.

Here is where purpose saves the day. We do know that:

4. God's purpose is to send a healing test
5. The purpose of a test is to heal
6. My purpose is to be close to God so that I might receive his healing

Notice that although God still remains an unknown essence, His purpose is comprehensible. It is to heal me. Notice that although I still can never be sure of what the specific reason is that I am going through this test, I do know that it has a healing purpose.

Notice that although I remain a mystery to my own self, I do know that seeing the test in this light will change me for the better. In time this change will be perceptible and you might get an insight as to the specific purpose behind the test.

There is no wasted energy or excess pain wondering why God is trying to make our life miserable. The only pain you go through is the pain intrinsic to the test itself! Our minds are now focused on drawing nigh unto God.

A lot of tests come from the people around us. See them now as a healing medicine, a reminder

that we need to continually progress towards God. Develop that spiritual reflex into a habit that will save you tons of pain.

Try looking at the Writings with the eye of purpose. Make it a habit.

## ● **How Purpose Helps Us to Focus**

**Clearly understanding purpose focuses our energies to accomplish things and serves as a catalyst to action.**

You are on an Arctic expedition when you get separated from the others during a blinding storm. You stumble upon a back-up camp. There is a pen with sled dogs. You recognize one dog as an excellent lead dog, some of the others are vaguely familiar or unknown to you. There is also a sled filled with scientific equipment on it. You know the way back to the main camp from here but you are physically deteriorating. What is your plan of action? [Take a moment to think of your plan.]

In this allegorical story, the lead dog is "purpose". The familiar dogs are your memory and senses. The unknown dogs are the complex changes going on inside of you (such as adrenaline surges - shaking and shivering initiated by body to create warmth.)

The point is when you have clarity of purpose, in this case physical survival, it acts both as a catalyst and a point of focus for all of your physical activity. All of this happens at incredible speed. It's safe to say we are only aware of a small percentage of the activity going on within us.

It's also safe to say what you're most clear about is your purpose.

Now you know all of this. What's the point?

Let's go back to one of our linchpin quotes from the identity exercise.

*"The spiritual world is like unto the phenomenal world. They are the exact counterpart of each other. Whatever objects appear in this world of existence are the outer pictures of the world of heaven." -- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 10*

If the known and unknown intricacies of your physical being are galvanized and focused because of a clear sense of purpose to physically survive then it follows that a clear sense of purpose to spiritually survive will galvanize and focus your known and unknown spiritual faculties toward that goal. We need to develop a clear vision of what it means to be a servant of God functioning within the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.

## ● **Purpose Allows You to Live with Mystery**

**As long as you know what your purpose is, you are never lost in a state of confusion. In effect, you become more comfortable living with the mystery of your own soul and others.**

## ● **Purpose and Communication**

Say someone comes to your house with a mysterious box. It makes a funny noise and has lots of odd looking gadgets attached to it. What kind of questions would you ask the person who brought it. You are assured it poses no threat. [Take a moment to think of your questions.]

Very quickly on you would want to know what is the purpose of the box.

Think of any situation where you've felt communication has not been clear and consider how speaking in terms of purpose and identifying the powers to achieve the purpose might have clarified matters. [Write it out for yourself.]

## ● **How Do Your Personal Goals Match Up with Your Divine Purposes?**

Take a sheet of paper and list activities you do during the course of a typical day and why you do them. Now fill in the following chart, matching your human purposes with what the Writings identify as our divine purposes:

### DIVINE PURPOSES -- HUMAN PURPOSES

Know and worship God

Acquire Virtues

Bear and Endure

Obey God

Carry forward an ever-advancing civilization

Aid the Cause of God

Goodly deeds

Praiseworthy character

Patience and Submission

Exalt God's Word

Show love to one another

Treat all men equally

Believe in institutions

When you merge your human and divine purposes you are performing actions in harmony with the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. This infuses even the mundane daily tasks of life with the spirit of faith. The highest degree of faith we can have access to. This means our faculties are animated by the spirit of faith and can thus understand heavenly realities and divine mysteries which includes our souls -- servants of God. This enables us to see another dimension of ourselves and our relationships.

It's okay to have a material purpose behind what you do in the course of a day but it's definitely better to have a spiritual purpose that originates in *"the spiritual Kingdom never causes sadness"* ('Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 110.) If your purposes come from the spiritual kingdom then you are *"A man living with his thoughts in this Kingdom knows perpetual joy."* ('Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 110)

This is an intellectually simple concept to grasp but tricky to implement. The key is to merge your material purposes with spiritual purposes that make sense to you, not your husband, wife, best friend or whomever. For example, you have a job that you're not thrilled with but for good reasons you have to stay there. Work done in the spirit of service is worship may not be your cup of tea. Perhaps, *"Thou wert created to bear and endure..."* (Bahá'u'lláh, Baha'i Prayers, p. 215) is a better fit because it helps you identify with Bahá'u'lláh when he was in prison. That may work for you today, it may not next week, because we are constantly changing and evolving.

*"Question.--It is said in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas "...whoso is deprived thereof, hath gone*

*astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed." What is the meaning of this verse?*

Answer.-- . . . Therefore, the blessed verse means that good actions alone, without the knowledge of God, cannot be the cause of eternal salvation, everlasting success, and prosperity, and entrance into the Kingdom of God." -- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 238

Good human purposes are not divine purposes. A human purpose has as its goal a desired result in this world. A person can work to provide food and shelter with the end goal a material necessity. This human purpose is compatible with many possible divine purposes.

The individual needs to be conscious each day of doing things for a spiritual purpose. Without doing this, your thoughts will always be in the human world. When we read "Pain and Sorrow", we see that the Master says a person who has his thoughts in the Kingdom is calm and serene because troubles only affect the surface.

You can eat because you are hungry or for pleasure. But, if you eat to maintain your ability to work for the Cause, you will eat more healthily. If you work not only to support your family but also because it's a form of worship, you will have a heightened sense of conscience about doing anything unethical.

Of all the beautiful eloquent talks by 'Abdu'l-Baha, "Pain and Sorrow" truly stands out.

*PAIN AND SORROW*

November 22nd [1911]

"In this world we are influenced by two sentiments, Joy and Pain.

Joy gives us wings! In times of joy our strength is more vital, our intellect keener, and our understanding less clouded. We seem better able to cope with the world and to find our sphere of usefulness. But when sadness visits us we become weak, our strength leaves us, our comprehension is dim and our intelligence veiled. The actualities of life seem to elude our grasp, the eyes of our spirits fail to discover the sacred mysteries, and we become even as dead beings.

There is no human being untouched by these two influences; but all the sorrow and the grief that exist come from the world of matter--the spiritual world bestows only the joy!

If we suffer it is the outcome of material things, and all the trials and troubles come from this world of illusion.

For instance, a merchant may lose his trade and depression ensues. A workman is dismissed and starvation stares him in the face. A farmer has a bad harvest, anxiety fills his mind. A man builds a house which is burnt to the ground and he is straightway homeless, ruined, and in despair.

All these examples are to show you that the trials which beset our every step, all our sorrow, pain, shame and grief, are born in the world of matter; whereas the spiritual

Kingdom never causes sadness. A man living with his thoughts in this Kingdom knows perpetual joy. The ills all flesh is heir to do not pass him by, but they only touch the surface of his life, the depths are calm and serene.

Today, humanity is bowed down with trouble, sorrow and grief, no one escapes; the world is wet with tears; but, thank God, the remedy is at our doors. Let us turn our hearts away from the world of matter and live in the spiritual world! It alone can give us freedom! If we are hemmed in by difficulties we have only to call upon God, and by His great Mercy we shall be helped." -- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 109-110

If your purposes come from the Kingdom, your thoughts will too. The more you are able to merge human and divine purposes, the less pain and sorrow you will have in your life. Not only will you have more joy, which makes your strength more vital, your intellect keener, and your understanding less clouded.

When Dr. Dwight Allen gave a talk at Green Acre, in 1996, he mentioned that scientific studies show that the more joyous the classroom, the better the students learn. As a result, one African country made it a rule that the teacher was responsible for a joyous classroom.

If you have successfully merged a human and a divine purpose, you are assured that you will be given the power and the courage to achieve this joint purpose.

Merging human purposes and divine purposes provides a system of checks and balances where human purposes will be more ethical. Your divine purposes will be more practical. The merging has to make sense to you. There is no formula.

If human purposes and divine purposes are one, a huge amount of stress can be eliminated. What you have effectively done is harmonize the goals and directions of your animal, human, and spiritual natures. These three natures are no longer in conflict. This is the key for serenity and happiness.

## **• Now what does all this have to do with relationships?**

If you are motivated by a clear, consistent spiritual purpose to be a servant of God then you will be attracted to souls who are like motivated and conversely other souls who are at that maturity level will be attracted to you. Thus leading to more healthy relationships. If you are inconsistent, vague, wishy-washy, whatever you want to call it about your "great purpose" then that's who you will attract and who you will be attracted to.