

**The Eternal
Covenant**

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The Creator of all things is God, the One, the Incomparable, the Self-Subsisting. He has created the heavens and the earth with its mountains and valleys, its forests, meadows, deserts, rivers and seas. God has caused every living thing to come into being. He has made man and has engraved on him His image.

Bahá'u'lláh teaches us that **the essence of God is incomprehensible** to the human mind, for the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. The representations that the followers of various religions make of Him are but fruits of their own imaginations. God is not a man, and He is not a mere force spread throughout the universe. The words we must necessarily use to refer to the Source of our being, such as the Heavenly Father, the Heavenly Power, the Great Spirit, each express one of His names and attributes in the human tongue, which is totally inadequate to describe Him.

In the Hidden Words, we read:

“O Son of Man! I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name thee and fill thy soul with the spirit of life.”

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According to these words of Bahá'u'lláh, God's love for us is the very reason for our existence. We must be ever conscious of this love which protects us, sustains us, and fills us with the spirit of life. In moments of difficulty or ease, of sadness or joy, we must remember that **His love is continually being showered upon us.**

From the Bahá'í Teachings, we learn that having created us out of His love, God has established with us a Covenant which is to last throughout the ages. The word "covenant" means pact or promise between two or more people. According to the Eternal Covenant, **the All-Bountiful Creator never abandons us**, and, from time to time, makes His Will and His Purpose known to us through one of His Manifestations.

The verb "manifest" means to reveal, to show something that was not known before. The Manifestations of God are those special Beings who **reveal to us the Word of God**. They are Universal Educators who teach us how to live according to the Will of God and how to achieve true happiness. Among these Manifestations are Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, Muhammad, and, of course, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, the twin Manifestations of God for this age.

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Our resolve to be firm in the Covenant will grow stronger if, especially in times of tests, we remember Bahá'u'lláh's life, both His sufferings and His extraordinary victories, and remind ourselves of the unlimited love He had for every human being. Let these words be engraved in our minds and hearts:

“The Ancient Beauty hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner within this most mighty Stronghold that the whole world may attain unto true liberty. He hath drained to its dregs the cup of sorrow, that all the peoples of the earth may attain unto abiding joy, and be filled with gladness. This is of the mercy of your Lord, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful. We have accepted to be abased, O believers in the Unity of God, that ye may be exalted, and have suffered manifold afflictions, that ye might prosper and flourish. He Who hath come to build anew the whole world, behold, how they that have joined partners with God have forced Him to dwell within the most desolate of cities!”

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A pact has two parts; it is made between two parties each of whom promises to act in a certain way. In the Eternal Covenant of God, His part has always been fulfilled. But how can we make sure that we fulfill our part in this mighty Covenant?

The Covenant calls upon us to recognize the Manifestation of God and to submit to His Will. We should remember that **the purpose of our lives is to know and to worship God**. This is explained in numerous passages of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. The short obligatory prayer is the most familiar example.

“I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerless and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth.

“There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.”

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Since we can only know God through His Manifestations, we can only fulfill the purpose of our lives by recognizing His Manifestation for our day. Those of us who have had the bounty of accepting Bahá'u'lláh should be grateful to live in a day when all the promises of the past are being fulfilled. We should be thankful to God for having bestowed upon us the precious gift of recognizing Bahá'u'lláh at a time when the majority of the earth's inhabitants are unaware of His glory. Bahá'u'lláh says:

“This is the Day in which God’s most excellent favors have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things. It is incumbent upon all the peoples of the world to reconcile their differences, and, with perfect unity and peace, abide beneath the shadow of the Tree of His care and loving-kindness.”

How sad it would be if today someone were to hear the glad tidings of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, but accept Him not and decide to follow the traditions of the past. He would join those who in every age have hoped for the coming of the Promised One, but when He appeared, have rejected Him and, unfaithful to the Eternal Covenant of God, have clung to their own superstitions.

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Having accepted Bahá'u'lláh, we must remain constant and firm in His Faith and obey His commandments. We cannot allow the criticisms of the wayward among men to steer us away from the true path we have chosen. We must stay firm and steadfast in the Covenant. Bahá'u'lláh says:

“The first and foremost duty prescribed unto men, next to the recognition of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, is the duty of steadfastness in His Cause. Cleave thou unto it, and be of them whose minds are firmly fixed and grounded in God.”

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