

## Fourth Reading

There is nothing greater or more blessed than the Love of God! It gives healing to the sick, balm to the wounded, joy and consolation to the whole world, and through it alone can man attain Life Everlasting. The essence of all religions is the Love of God, and it is the foundation of all the sacred teachings... spirituality is the greatest of God's gifts, and 'Life Everlasting' means 'Turning to God'

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. If sorrow and adversity visit us, let us turn our faces to the Kingdom and heavenly consolation will be outpoured. If we are sick and in distress let us implore God's healing, and He will answer our prayer. When our thoughts are filled with the bitterness of this world, let us turn our eyes to the sweetness of God's compassion and He will send us heavenly calm! If we are imprisoned in the material world, our spirit can soar into the Heavens and we shall be free indeed!

*Bahá'í Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

## Closing Prayer

O my Lord, my Beloved, my Desire!

Befriend me in my loneliness and accompany me in my exile; remove my sorrow, cause me to be devoted to Thy Beauty, withdraw me from all else save Thee, attract me through Thy fragrances of holiness, cause me to be associated in Thy Kingdom with those who are severed from all else save Thee and who long to serve Thy Sacred Threshold and who stand to work in Thy Cause, and enable me to be one of Thy servants who have attained to Thy good pleasure. Verily, Thou art the Gracious, the Generous!

*Bahá'í Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

## Order of Service

### Opening Prayer

O my Lord! O my Lord! This is a lamp lighted by the fire of Thy love and ablaze with the flame which is ignited in the tree of Thy mercy. O my Lord! Increase his enkindlement, heat and flame, with the fire which is kindled in the Sinai of Thy Manifestation. Verily, Thou art the Confirmer, the Assister, the Powerful, the Generous, the Loving!

My God, I am a flame lighted by the hand of Thy power. Do not permit that it be extinguished by the winds of trials. Increase my love for Thee, my ardor for the Beauty of Thy Oneness, the fire that burneth in me in the Sinai of Thy Singleness, and the eternal life in me, through Thy bounty and grace; for Thou art the Protector, the Watcher, the Pitiful and the Merciful!

*Bahá'í Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

### First Reading

Do men imagine that they will be left at ease because they say, "We believe," and will not be tested with affliction? Lo! We tested those who were before you. Thus Allah knoweth those who are sincere, and knoweth those who feign.

*Islam, Qur'an Sura 29:2-3*

Not until man is tried doth the pure gold distinctly separate from the dross. Torment is the fire of test wherein the pure gold shineth resplendently and the impurity is burned and blackened

...be not sorrowful when meeting with worldly difficulties and depressions, for they pass away -- and thine shall be immortality during ages and centuries, times and cycles.

*Bahá'í Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

### Music

## Second Reading

I will put them to the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested.

*Judaism, Zechariah 13:9*

O Son of Man! For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.

*Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh*

Devotion to God's Name is my lamp; In this lamp is poured the oil of suffering. The light of realization burns away this oil, Lifted is the encounter with Death. Let not the world ridicule this as an idle boast: Vast loads of firewood are reduced to ashes by a tiny spark of fire.

*Sikhism, Adi Granth, Asa M.1.*

He is like a refiner's fire and purifier of silver: and he shall purify and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

*Judaism, Malachi 3:3-4*

The mind and spirit of man advance when he is tried by suffering. The more the ground is ploughed the better the seed will grow, the better the harvest will be. Just as the plough furrows the earth deeply, purifying it of weeds and thistles, so suffering and tribulation free man from the petty affairs of this worldly life until he arrives at a state of complete detachment. His attitude in this world will be that of divine happiness. Man is, so to speak, unripe: the heat of the fire of suffering will mature him... Through suffering he will attain to an eternal happiness which nothing can take from him...

*Bahá'í Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

## Music

## Third Reading

Life is like a hill. ...the Creator made it steep and slippery, To right and left deep waters surround it, You cannot turn back once you start to climb. You must climb with a load on your head. The world is a place of trial.

*African Traditional Religions*

Praise be to God that thou hast kept steadfast with all firmness under the millstone of tests like unto a grain of diamond. Be not grieved; tests lead to the development of holy souls and the ardor of the flame of fire causeth the pure gold to shine and the violence of winds is conducive to the growth and thriving of a firm and well rooted tree.

*Bahá'í Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

...we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts...

*Christianity, Romans 5:3-5*

... The tests of God are surrounding you from all directions and many afflictions have occurred; but thanks be to God that you... are patient, thankful and constant... Anybody can be happy in the state of comfort, ease, health, success, pleasure and joy; but if one will be happy and contented in the time of trouble, hardship and prevailing disease, it is the proof of nobility. Become thou not extinguished by the winds of tests, but rather become ignited and be more happy...

*Bahá'í Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

## Music

Open Prayers

## Music