

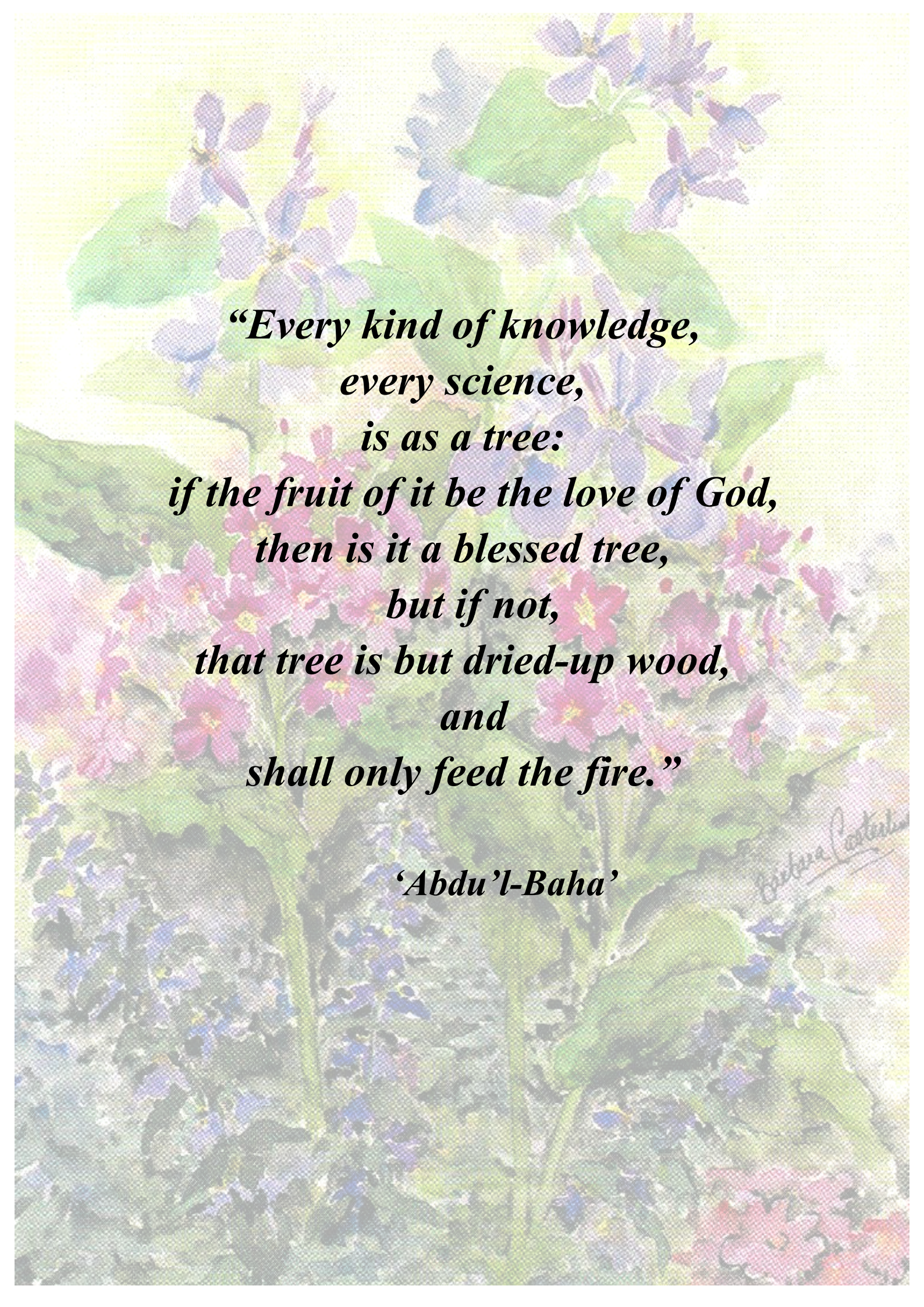


Hiru no Hoshi

No. 267

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*“Every kind of knowledge,
every science,
is as a tree:
if the fruit of it be the love of God,
then is it a blessed tree,
but if not,
that tree is but dried-up wood,
and
shall only feed the fire.”*

‘Abdu’l-Baha’

Barbara Costello

It was a hot, August day in Okinawa, and the children's tempers matched the weather.

The four older children sat at the dining room table trying to concentrate on their Summer Workbooks that the school gives each elementary school student.

"I hate this!" shouted Riaz. "Why do we have to do this junk! We should be outside playing and enjoying our summer vacation!!"

"Yeah!" agreed Shahla, "Anisa gets to do whatever she wants; why do we have to study, study, study!!"

Practical Mona sighed and looking up from her work said, "Shahla, Anisa isn't in school yet. When you were her age, you just played and played while we worked!"

"Her time will come!" added Asma, nodding wisely.

"But, WHY," demanded Riaz. "Why do we have to study and learn stupid stuff like history, writing, math, science.... Well, science is kind of fun... but the rest is JUNK!!!"

"Riaz, if we didn't learn anything, we would be just like the animals," suggested Mona.

"Yeah, what's wrong with that! Sounds good to me! They just play and eat and sleep!" Shahla said jumping up from her chair and clapping.

Asma quietly spoke, "The animals were doing the same thing thousands of years ago that they are doing today. They haven't progressed at all in all that time."

Everyone turned to look at Asma, and they all thought for a moment.

Mona added, "So, thousands of years ago, man didn't have refrigerators, cars, airplanes, televisions....they didn't even have bicycles!"

"Or unicycles!" added Shahla. She loved riding on her unicycle because it was something she could do that most people couldn't.

"I guess I see." Riaz reluctantly agreed, "But why can't we just learn the stuff we like and not junk stuff like writing and history"—Riaz's two worst subjects.

"Well, if you couldn't read, you couldn't learn what other people had already discovered, so that you could build on it," said Mona.

"And history is so we know what happened before, so we don't make the same mistakes twice. History is like our memory.... What would happen if you couldn't remember what you did yesterday or last week?" added Asma.

Now this whole time, Father and Mother had been sitting in the next room listening and quietly enjoying



the children's conversation. As a school teacher himself, Father could not keep silent one more minute.

"You guys have come to the correct conclusion. Good job! Baha'u'llah tells us that, ***"True learning is that which is conducive to the well-being of the world..."*** The real reason we should study and learn is so that we can help advance civilization. Of course the more we learn the more it helps us as individuals, too."



"That is like what we memorized in Children's Class," added Mona. ***"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value..."***

"I know this one!!" said Shahla jumping up, "... ***'Education can, alone cause it to reveal its treasures,'***ah..."

"The most important part, Shahla!" put in Riaz.... ***'and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.!'*** See, I am not ignorant! I know stuff!"

"Very nicely done", praised Father. "Let's put it all together and then think about what it means."

Then they all recited together, even little Anisa. ***"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can alone cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom."***

"Can you guys put it in people talk, please?" asked little Anisa.

Everyone laughed and Asma answered, "It means that each of have great abilities, that are like beautiful jewels, inside of us....but they are hidden and not ready yet, not shining.... By studying hard, we can bring those abilities out and share them and use them to help mankind have a better world."

"Good job explaining!" Father praised, while the other children clapped for Asma.

"So we study math and science and reading and writing and geography and history so that we can help mankind have a better civilization!" Mona summarized.

"Then, the whole point of learning is to help mankind, not just for yourself. The point is not to be #1 in your class or school, so that you can be proud and look down on people." Riaz gave Mona a look that said he thought that is exactly why she studied so hard.

"Of course!" Mona looked straight at Riaz and replied, "Think of all the really smart people that built terrible things that hurt lots of people....like the people who made the atomic bomb, or all the war machines!"





“That’s why we study history!” put in Asma, “Look at the Roman Empire, they had such a great civilization. Then they got really selfish, self-centered and materialistic, and the whole thing fell apart!”

“Knowledge is necessary for human progress, but only if it is combined with spiritual and moral progress,” said Mother, coming in to join the family. “Mankind as a group is like a beautiful bird, and like all birds, it has two wings that let it soar high into the sky...One wing is material knowledge, and the other is spiritual knowledge.” If only one wing is strong and the other weak, the bird cannot fly.”

“I am a bird flying in the sky! I have two strong wings!”

shouted Anisa as she waved her arms up and down and ran around the room. The children all smiled at her. Then Riaz jumped up and said, “I have only one strong wing!” as he waved his one arm up and down as he squatted and jumped around in a circle as if he were trying to fly, making pitiful noises.

With that the children all laughed so hard they were falling on the floor. Riaz always was the comedian of the family.

“There is another aspect to education that we need to think about,” put in Mother. “Where and how do we learn what is right, what is good and not good. With science we learn how to invent great things, but it doesn’t tell us if we should use it or not...like the atomic bomb. Who and from where do we learn to decide what is right and what is wrong?”

“From Mommy and Daddy!” Anisa shouted, jumping up and down.

Everyone laughed again.

“Where do you think we learned it—and don’t say from our Mommy and Daddy!” Mother said, smiling.

“Baha’u’llah tells us that, *‘The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His Glory, and this cannot be attained save through the knowledge of His Divine Manifestation.’* Who can explain what that means?”

Mother asked.

Mona spoke thoughtfully, “Everything we know comes from God, but we can’t really learn any of it directly from God. We need to learn if from the Manifestations of God.... Is that right, Mom?”

“Very good Mona,” praised Mother; “and Who are some of



the Manifestations of God?”

“Christ!” “Buddha!” “Muhammad!” “Moses!” “Krishna!” “The Bab!” “Baha’u’llah!”

The children all shouted at once. Even little Anisa knew Their Names.

Mother explained, “And from each one of Them, mankind has learned not only what is right and wrong, but They have given mankind the inspiration and knowledge of how to build great civilizations.”

Father added, “Every time one of these Manifestations of God came, He founded a great civilization. It was like springtime. Then after some centuries the people stopped obeying Him, and started going their own way, and the culture started dying. It was like winter. Then a new Manifestation would come and bring a new Civilization. And spring would come again.”

“And now,” Mother put in, “we are in spring again, because Baha’u’llah has come with new knowledge to teach us how to build a great new world civilization.

“Yeah!!” the children all shouted and clapped.

“But,” added Father, “it will only happen if each of us does our best to learn as much as we can, so that we can help build this wonderful new world civilization, where there is no more war, and no one will ever be too hungry or too poor again! A world of peace and unity!”

“Come on guys!” shouted Riaz. “The world needs us!! Let’s get busy studying!!”

Everyone laughed.

Mother kissed the top of his head as she placed a plate full of cookies on the table to give them energy to study.

And they all returned to their homework.



Quiz

1. What are the children doing when the story begins?

2. Is it a cold day?

3. Why is Riaz angry?

4. What would happen if everyone never learned anything, but just played like the animals?

5. Why should we study?

6. How should we use our knowledge?

7. What are mankind's two wings that help us make a great civilization?

8. What is the source of all learning?

9. What are the names of some of the Divine Manifestations of God?

10. What will our great world civilization look like?

How did you do? Did you get them all right? The answers are on the Parents' Page.





Materials:

- *A Twig with a branch in it, or 4 sticks
- *Embroidery thread or string
- *Yarn
- *Large darning needle or Bobby pin taped at one end,
- *Beads, leaves, or other decorations
- *Scissors
- *Needle and thread to sew on beads, etc.



Method:

- *Wind the string around the branched area of the stick to make a loom.
- *Tie off when finished.
- *Use the Bobby pin as a needle for the yarn or thread.
(The tape holds the open end of the Bobby pin closed)
- *Weave the yarn or Embroidery thread through the loom.
- *Tie off when finished.
- *Tie on beads or other decorations.

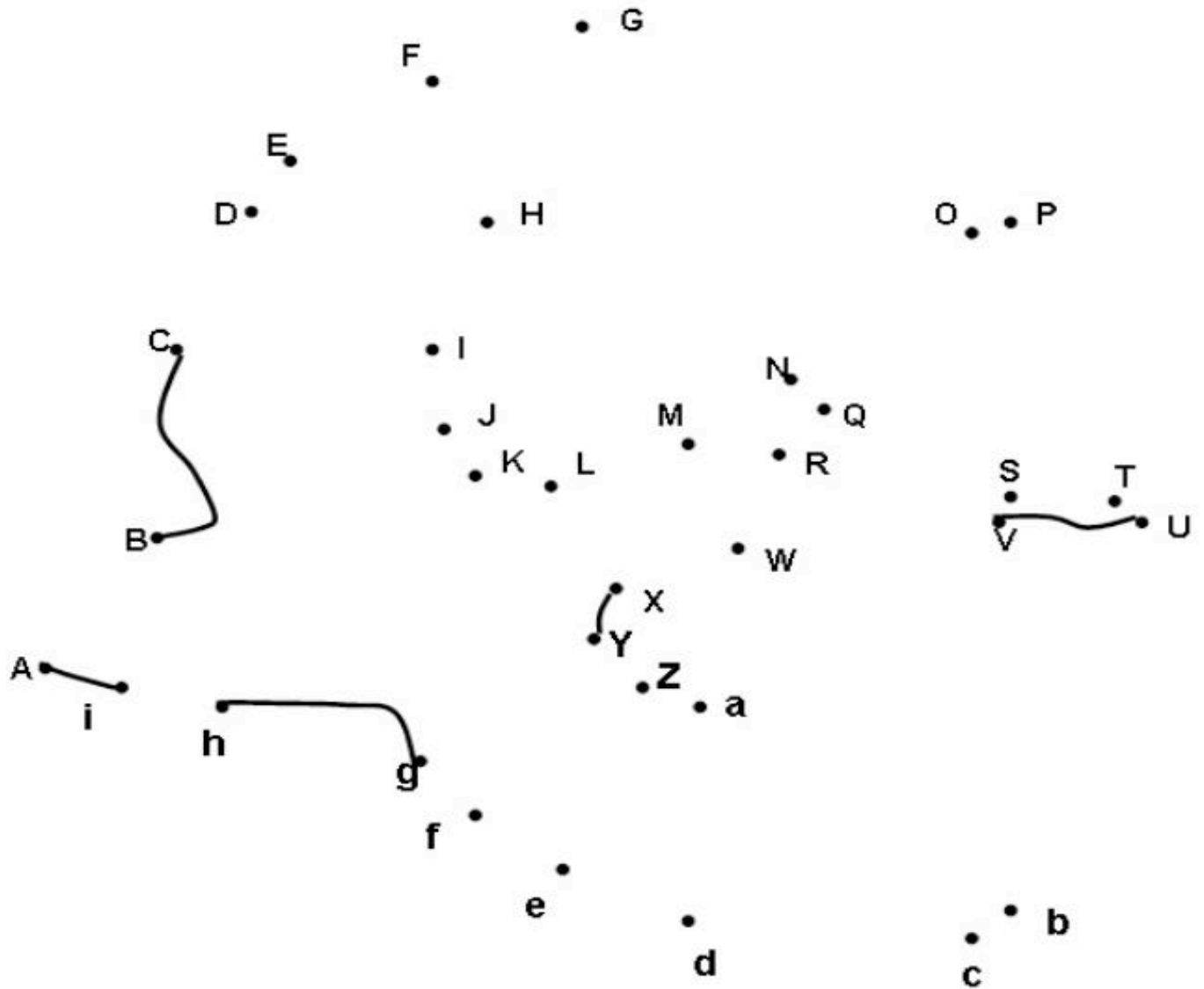


Alternative:

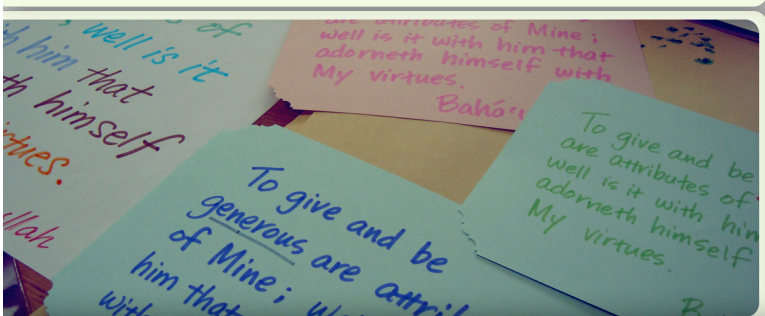
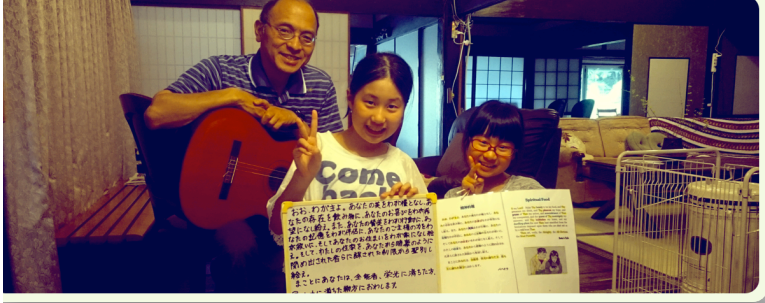
- *Wrap yarn around 4 sticks to make the 4 corners of a loom,
- *Complete as above.



Draw a straight line from A to B, B to C...all the way to Z, then from a to b, b to c..... all the way to z. What do you see. The two wings of one bird?



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Parents Page

“While the children are yet in their infancy feed them from the breast of heavenly grace, foster them in the cradle of all excellence, rear them in the embrace of bounty. Give them the advantage of every useful kind of knowledge. Let them share in every new and rare and wonderful craft and art. Bring them up to work and strive and accustom them to hardship. Teach them to dedicate their lives to matters of great import, and inspire them to undertake studies that will benefit mankind.” ‘Abdu’l-Baha’

“The third Tajalli is concerning arts, crafts and sciences. Knowledge is as wings to man’s life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone. The knowledge of such sciences, however, should be acquired as can profit the peoples of the earth, and not those which begin with words and end with words. Great indeed is the claim of scientists and craftsmen on the peoples of the world. Unto this beareth witness the Mother Book on the day of His return. Happy are those possessed of a hearing ear. In truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and a source of glory, of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him. Thus hath the Tongue of Grandeur spoken in this Most Great Prison. Baha’u’llah

“Arts, crafts and science uplift the world of being, and are conducive to its exaltation. Knowledge is as wings to man’s life and a ladder for his ascent.” ----Baha'u'llah

“I pray to God that...ye may acquire heavenly knowledge, ye may secure a training of merciful characteristics and that ye may advance from day to day so that each of you may become a peerless shrub in the Divine Rose-garden and may be adorned with full foliage, blossoms and fruits.” ‘Abdu’l-Baha’

“Although to acquire the sciences and arts is the greatest glory of mankind, this is so only on condition that man’s river flow into the mighty sea, and draw from God’s ancient source His inspiration.....but if not, a mere drop will perhaps shut a man off from flooding grace, for with learning cometh arrogance and pride, and it bringeth on error and indifference to God.” ‘Abdu’l-Baha’



Answers to the Quiz;

1) Summer Homework. 2) No, a hot day. 3) He doesn’t want to study. 4) We wouldn’t progress. 5) To help civilization. 6) To help mankind. 7) Spiritual knowledge and Material Knowledge. 8) God, through the Manifestations of God. 9) Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Mohammad, The Bab, Baha’u’llah. 10) No more war, no one hungry, no one too poor, no more homeless people, one united world.



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