

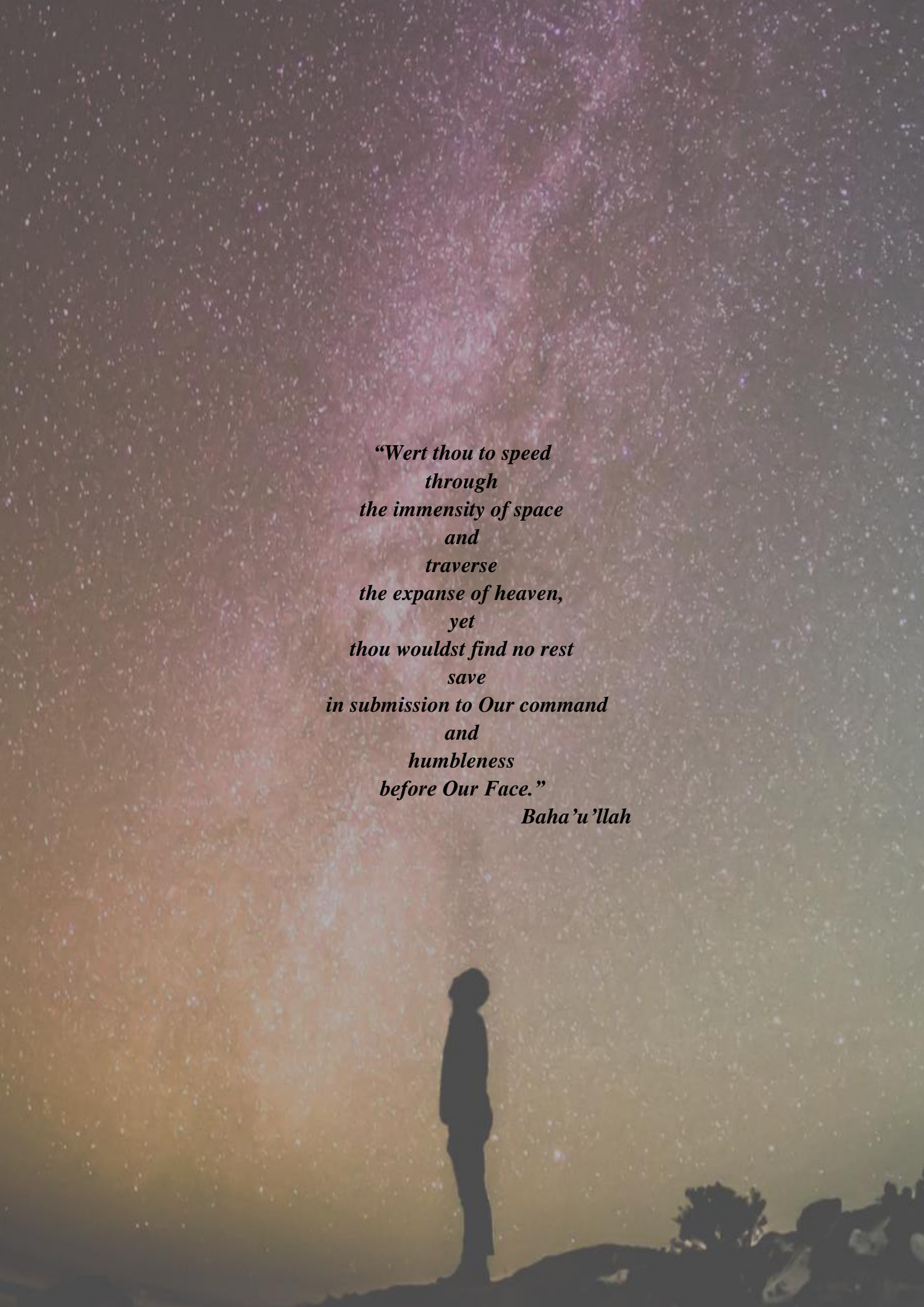


Hiru no Hoshi

No. 270

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*“Wert thou to speed
through
the immensity of space
and
traverse
the expanse of heaven,
yet
thou wouldst find no rest
save
in submission to Our command
and
humbleness
before Our Face.”*

Baha’u’llah

It was Friday afternoon and the children were just arriving home from school. They had been talking very seriously as they walked. Riaz suddenly shouted,

“Well, I can’t understand how someone could make a statue out of stone and then think that it suddenly becomes god, and everyone put flowers and incense around it and say that it is holy! It’s just stone! That is not what God is!”

Mona calmly answered, “Riaz no human can understand God, so anything we can imagine in our heads as to what God is, isn’t anything like what God really is! So what is the difference between our imagination, or that person’s stone statue?”

The children came up the stairs of the porch and sat down around Mother and little Anisa. They had been sitting there, waiting for the kids to come home from school.

Asma, turning to Mother said, “My friends and I were talking about religion today, and some of them think that their religion is the only one that worships the real God. Other friends say that they were taught to believe in lots of different gods: a tree god, a river god, a mountain god. Then some of my friends say that there is no God, that God was an idea that was just made up by people. What is true? What can I say to my friends?”

“I told him that Baha’u’llah teaches us that there is only one God.” said Mona proudly.

“Yes, but how do I explain and prove that?” asked Asma again.

“What about the painting and the artist story?” suggested Riaz. “Asma, you point to a painting of people or houses, or something and say, ‘You see that painting over there? The strangest thing happened. That canvas was sitting on a shelf with some open paints, and there was a big earthquake! The canvas and all the paints fell to the ground. Then the next day we went to clean up the mess and that painting had accidentally happened as the paint fell on the blank canvas.’ Those kids will start laughing and say they don’t believe you! That a regular painting couldn’t just happen with spilt paint....”



“I want to see the painting! I want to see it!” shouted little Anisa, jumping up and down.

“Shhh, let them finish.” scolded Shahla, “It is just a story Anisa.”

Mona continued, “Then, Asma, you explain to them that this world, even the tiniest, little bug, is much more complex and complicated than a painting, so how could all the wonderful things in the world, including us humans, come about by accident—lots and lots of accidents?”

“I am impressed that all of you are considering such a deep subject as the existence of God! This is a subject university professors discuss! I am quite proud of you all!” said Mother. “And you remembered ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s explanation of the art and the artist very well! He summarized that story explaining that, because there is a creation, there must be a Creator.”

Asma thought about this for a moment. “OK, so I can explain that there is a God, but, what is God? Is there one or many? In school we study about lots of cultures and lots of religions. Does every religion and culture have a God? And also, how am I (I mean, each person) connected to God?”

“Ok,” said Mother. “As I said, this is a really deep question. I will try to put it into simpler terms to make it easier to understand.”

Mother thought a moment, sighed, and continued. “One way is to think of God as being like the sun. (this is just an example, it isn’t really what God is). The sun gives life and light to the whole world. And each thing—a tree, a mountain, a river—reflects that light the best it can. But the best reflection of the sun is a mirror, and a perfect polished mirror reflects the sun perfectly.”



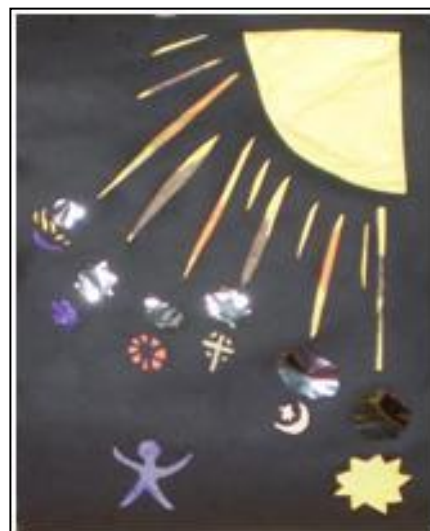
“Oh, I see,” said Riaz! “If people look at a tree, or a river, or a mountain, and say ‘That’s God!’, they aren’t wrong! It just isn’t a perfect reflection of God!”

“That’s right. So who can guess what the perfect polished Mirror would be in this example?” asked Mother.

“The Manifestations of God!” Mona, Asma, Riaz and Shahla all answered together.

“What’s that?” asked little Anisa.

“Those are all the great teachers from God, Anisa, like Christ, Buddha, Moses, and all the others.” explained Mona.



“Yes,” continued Mother, “that is why there are so many different religions, because each religion looks into their mirror, and sees God. The Christians look inside their mirror and see God in Jesus. The Buddhists look inside their mirror and see God in Buddha. The Muslims look inside their mirror and see God in Muhammad’s teachings.... They all know that their teacher is true.... But really, they are all true!”



Just then Father drove up and parked the car. As he got out, all the children ran to him and told him what they had been talking about. He sat down with the children, and Anisa sat on his lap.

“What do you think about this question, Dad?” asked Asma. “How can each of us connect to God? Does God care about me, and all my little problems?”

Father paused and then answered, “Well, I like science, so I like to think of God and the Manifestations of God as the power of electricity, or electro-magnetic energy and power plants....”



“That is not what God really is; it’s just another example, like the sun,” put in Mother.

Nodding, Father smiled and continued. “The power of electricity is everywhere; it is in the atoms of everything. But we can’t use it directly from the air. It must be gathered in a power plant. There are big power plants all over the world that gather and store electricity and send it to homes and businesses so that people can use it. We have it here in our house. But in order to use the electricity we must plug an electric appliance into the wall; for example, a lamp has to be plugged in to give light. So the Manifestations of God are like the big power plants. The lamp can’t connect directly to electricity without going through the power plants. And we don’t have the capacity to connect directly to God without going through the Manifestation of God. Even if we are saying prayers and thinking we are connecting directly to God, we are really going through Them. ‘Abdu’l-Baha’ explained that a man who tries to worship God without turning to His Manifestation is like a man in a dungeon trying through his imagination to revel in the glories of the sunshine.” Mother put in, “That means like if we were in a dark place



and we closed our eyes and tried to feel the warmth and light of the sun. We can remember it, but we can't really get light or warmth that way."



Father continued, "Also, just like the lamp's light is not for the lamp but for everyone in the house, when we receive light, or enlightenment, or knowledge, it shouldn't be for our own benefit; it is for serving and being of use to others,"

Mother then added "Another important thing to remember when we are thinking about God is that the Manifestations of God explain to us what God wants us to know and how to act during each age. As mankind progresses and becomes more and more civilized..." Anisa tugged at Mothers sleeves with a questioning look. "Civilized means acting less like animals and more like angels," Mother explained, and then continued, "we need new Teachers, new Manifestations of God to explain everything to us. That's why in every age a new Manifestation of God comes: Moses, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, and now the Bab and Baha'u'llah."

Shahla jumped up and said, "I know! Now Baha'u'llah is teaching us how to have a world civilization with all the world's people living in peace ..."

"...and quiet!" shouted Anisa, jumping up. Everyone looked at Anisa in surprise.

"Mom you always say that! **'Just give me some peace and quiet!!!'**" Riaz mimicked Mother's voice, and everyone laughed, including Mother and Father.

Mother, smiling continued her explanation. "Shahla is correct. Baha'u'llah is the Great Teacher sent by God to mankind in this wonderful age, to teach us how to take care of the planet, and to all live together in love and unity."

"**'One Planet, One People, Please!'** Just like my t-shirt says!" said Riaz proudly.

And all the children clapped and repeated "**One Planet, One People Please!**"

"So Asma," said Mona, "Now do you know what to tell your friends at school when you guys talk about God?"

"Wait! I still want to hear the answer to Asma's question about if God cares for all my problems," said Shahla.

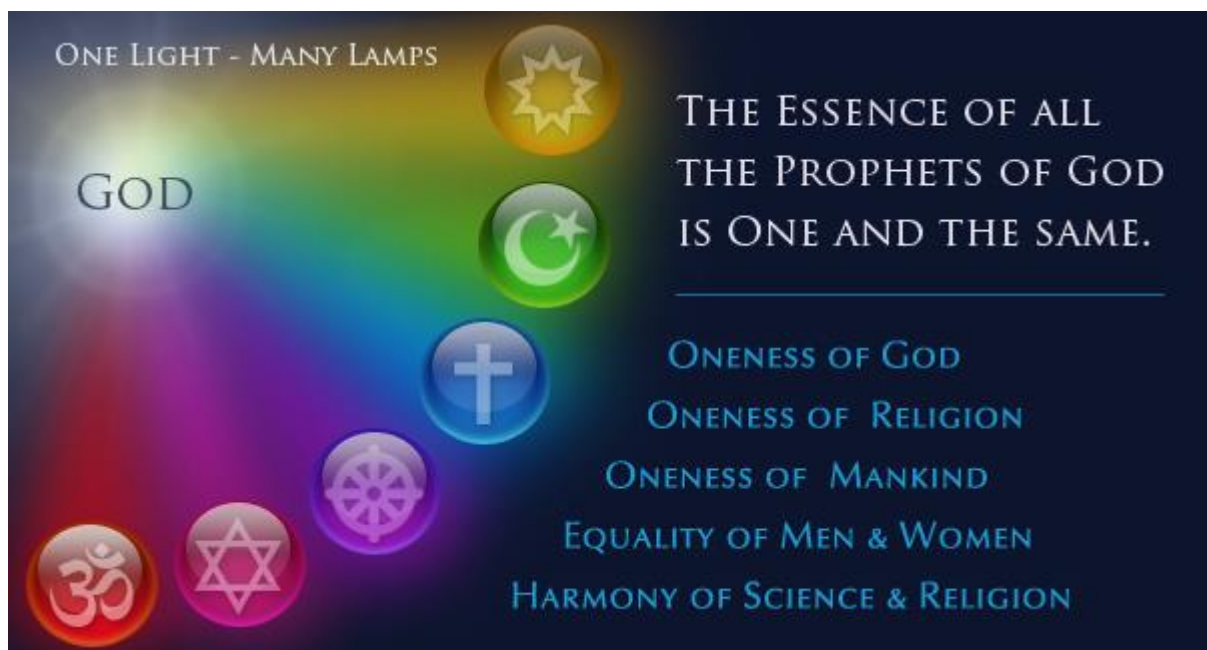


“Be assured, Shahla, that as a mother, I am very concerned about each one of my children’s problems, large or small. God (through the Manifestations of God) is a much better parent than I could ever be, and God loves us more than any of us could love anyone. We learn how to love from God! And God is very, very concerned and always helping us, even though we don’t realize it.”

“OK, I think I have a pretty good idea, now. I have to think about all of this and let it all circle around in my head for a while,” said Asma.

“You mean you have to meditate on it. That is a very good idea, Asma; we should all do that, and say some prayers for understanding while we are at it,” said Mother with a smile. “Now let’s all go in and get dinner ready, shall we. I will need all of your help!”

The children jumped up to put their book bags away, and everyone went to help Mother with dinner, laughing and talking as they went.



Quiz

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

2. Who is waiting for them when they get to the front porch?

3. What is Asma's question?

4. What example does Riaz use to explain that there is a God?

5. What does Mother say about God being reflected in our world?

6. Who are the Perfect Polished Mirrors?

7. Who drives up and joins the family?

8. What is Father's example about how we connect to God?

9. Who does Mother explain is the most recent Teacher from God?

10. What does Mother say about whether God loves each one of us?

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



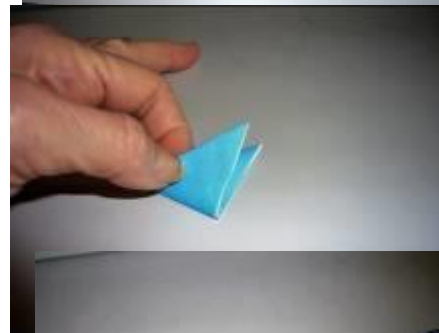
Origami Butterfly Pictures

Material:

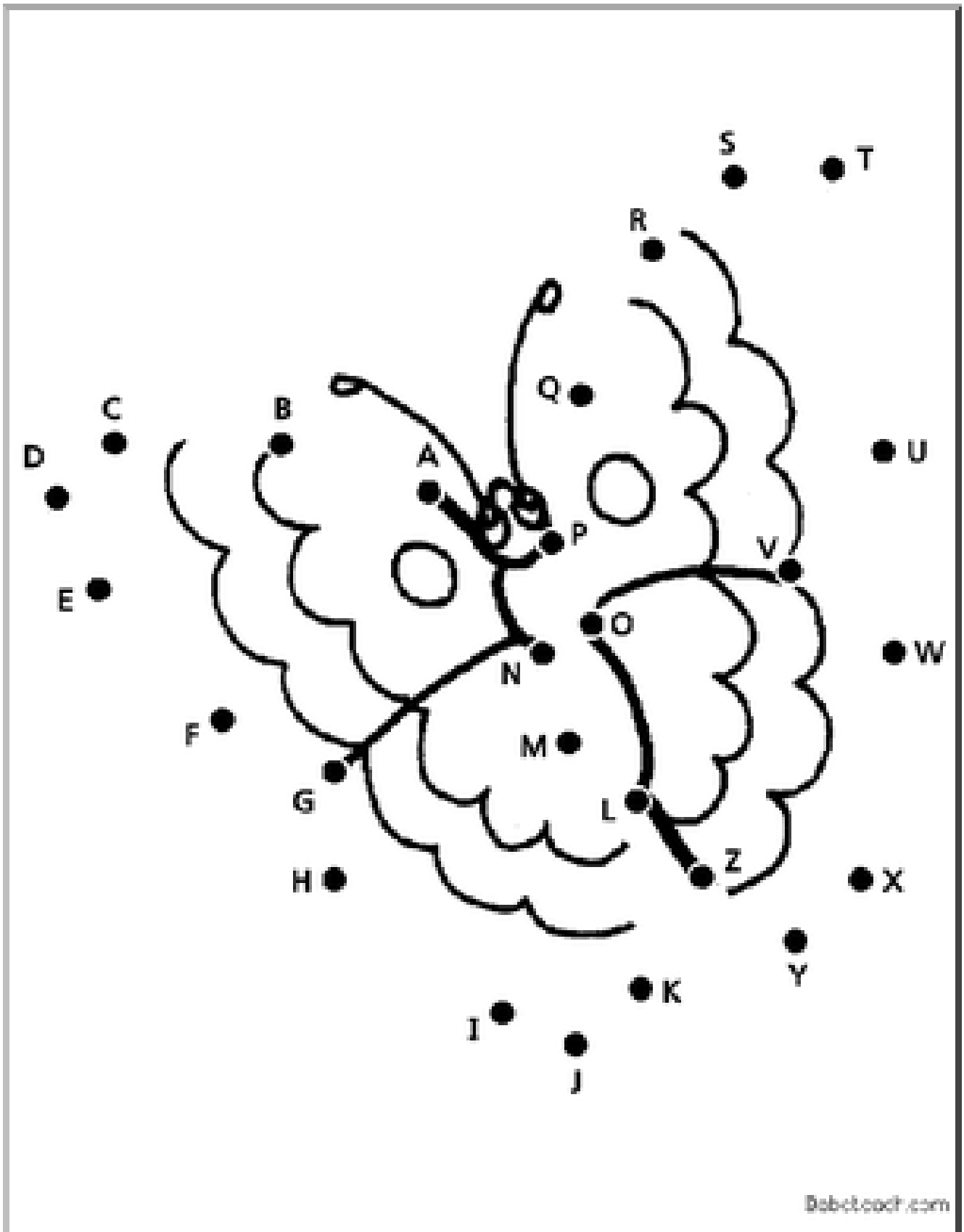
- Origami paper (small)
- Scissors
- Double sided tape
- Colored Construction Paper
- Crayons or Colored Pencils
- Glitter Glue, (optional)

Method

- Fold in half diagonally.
- Fold in half diagonally the other way.
- Fold so the two diagonals meet.
- Fold in half again.
- Cut off tip.
- Open, then fold in to pointy end.
- Fold pointy end up and around to make butterfly.
- Tape down using double-sided tape.
- Pull top wings up (straight out looks like a moth).
- On construction paper, draw a flower garden.
- Tape butterfly or butterflies onto the picture.
- Accent with glitter glue.



Dot to Dot





Parents Page

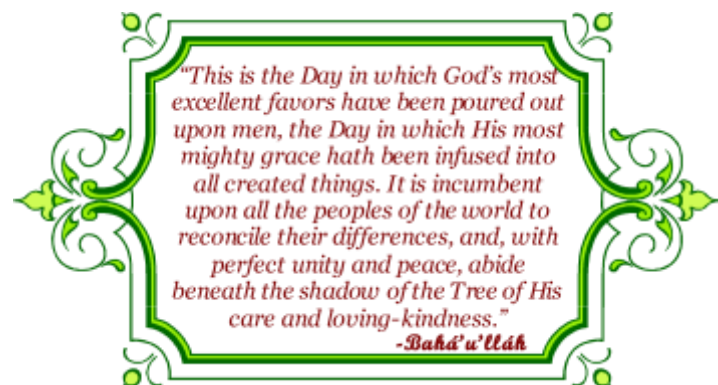
Some quotations to meditate upon.

“HE--glorified be His mention—resembleth the sun. Were unnumbered mirrors to be placed before it, each would, according to its capacity, reflect the splendor of that sun, and were none to be placed before it, it would still continue to rise and set, and the mirrors alone would be veiled from its light.” The Bab

“The reason for God’s having made Himself manifest, and for this shining forth of infinite lights from the realm of the invisible, is none other than the training of all men’s souls and the refining of the characters of all on earth—so that blessed individuals, who have freed themselves from the murk of the animal world, shall rise up with those qualities which are the adorning of the reality of man.” Abdu’l-Baha

“The divine religions must be the cause of oneness among men, and the means of unity and love; they must promulgate universal peace, free man from every prejudice, bestow joy and gladness, exercise kindness to all men and do away with every difference and distinction.” ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Baha*, p. 28.

“Can any power withstand the penetrative influence of the Word of God? Nay, by God! The proof is clear and the evidence is complete! If anyone looketh with the eyes of justice he shall be struck with wonder and amazement and will testify that all the peoples, sects and races of the world should be glad, content and grateful for the teachings and admonitions of Baha’u’llah. For these divine injunctions tame every ferocious beast, transform the creeping insect into a soaring bird, cause human souls to become angels of the kingdom, and make the human world a focus for the qualities of mercy.” ‘Abdu’l-Baha’



Quiz Answers: 1) Walking home from school. 2) Mother and little Anisa. 3) “How can I explain to my friends about God?” 4) A painting needs a painter. 5) Everything reflects God the best it can. 6) The Manifestations of God. 7) Father. 8) The way lamps connect to electric power. 9) Baha’u’llah. 10) Our mothers and fathers love and care for us, but God is a better parent than our own mothers and fathers and loves and cares for us more than they do.



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