

exploring without
prejudice

LESSON
5

Learning objectives

- : To understand the spiritual qualities necessary of a "true seeker"
- : To gain insight into the meaning and importance of detachment and of purifying one's heart in order to be a seeker after truth
- : To discern how both love and hate can prevent us from gaining spiritual knowledge
- : To perceive how our task of becoming a true seeker is a life long endeavor to spiritualize our being

materials you will need

- :: A dictionary
- :: Several pairs of scissors
- :: Pens, pencils, crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.
- :: White or colored paper or Post-It notes
- :: A manila file folder or similar piece of cardboard
- :: One copy of the "Homework and Feedback" sheet for each student

1. PRAYER (3 minutes)

Choose one prayer from the Prayers Page (section two) and have one of the children recite it. Alternatively, you can use any other prayer that corresponds with one of the stated learning objectives.

2. GO OVER HOMEWORK (5-10 minutes)

3. ACTIVITY (15-20 minutes)

The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate how our personal likes or dislikes can prevent us from seeing the larger reality.

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1. Have the children cut out approximately twenty 5cm by 5cm (2 inches by 2 inches) pieces of paper. You can use Post-It notes instead; in which case the children do not need to cut anything out.
2. Distribute the pieces of paper evenly among the children.
3. Ask them to write the name of something they like on each piece of paper. Guide them to write names of "possessions", games, toys, etc. and not people (such as their parents, siblings, or friends).
4. Block the picture of the earth on the activity sheet (section 3) with the file-folder or similar piece of cardboard while placing the small pieces of paper, writing-side up, on the picture so that they gradually cover the entire image.
5. Lift the file-folder and ask the children if they can see the picture – i.e. the "bigger reality" - hidden underneath (to which they will answer "No").
6. Point to one piece of paper at random and ask who has written on it. Ask that child to pick up just that piece of paper and move it to the side of the picture. A piece of the picture is now visible.
7. Ask another child to move another piece of paper to the side. Continue in this way until all the pieces of paper are removed and the picture is fully visible.
8. Ask the children what they see (it is a picture of the whole Earth).
9. Ask them if the objects they liked can be found somewhere on Earth (they will say 'Yes').

10. Ask them if they think it's better to have just the object they liked or to be able to enjoy everything on Earth.
11. Point out to them that when you are attached to or like any one thing too much, you are missing out on everything else that God has given us and the world has to offer. In other words being "detached" and having a pure heart are things that help us to become true seekers.

5. STORY (10-15 minutes)

Read the attached story and discuss the questions that follow it. Alternatively, you can use any other story that illustrates the stated learning objectives.

6. SACRED WRITING (5 minutes)

Review the passage below and make sure that everyone understands all the words. Alternatively, you may use any other Sacred Writing that corresponds with one of the stated learning objectives.

If a man were to declare, "There is a lamp in the next room which gives no light", one hearer might be satisfied with his report, but a wiser man goes into the room to judge for himself, and behold, when he finds the light shining brilliantly in the lamp, he knows the truth!

« Baha'i, Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks »

7. ASSIGN HOMEWORK (1 minute)

- › Complete one copy of the “Homework and Feedback” form in section 6 for each student and follow-up with the parents to make sure they have received it.
- › Ask everyone to read the Sacred Writing every day with their parents, older siblings, or a friend, and to talk with them about what the passage means to them.

8. PREPARE TO GIVE CLASS REPORT TO ENTIRE SCHOOL (5 minutes)

9. REFLECTION AND EVALUATION (3 minutes)

Take a few moments after the end of class to complete the “Reflection and Evaluation” sheet in section five.

Choose one of the following prayers:

Where is that fair-minded soul, O my God, ... and where is the man of insight to be found who will behold Thee with Thine own eyes? Is there any man of hearing who will hear Thee with Thine ears, or one endued with eloquence who will speak the truth in Thy days?

« Bahá'í Faith, Baha'u'llah, Prayers and Meditations »

There are two paths - one leading Godward, the other leading to worldly pleasure. He who follows one inevitably goes away from the other; because, like light and darkness they conflict. One leads to the imperishable spiritual realm; the other to the perishable physical realm.

« Hinduism, Upanishad 10 »

“Whoso in the world overcomes this base unruly craving, from him sorrows fall away, like water drops from a lotus leaf.

« Buddhism, Dhammapada »

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All That Is Best In Life

*based on an account told by 'Abdu'l-Baha
from Memorials of the Faithful, pp. 40-42*

Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida were like lamps - lamps lit with God's love. They served others in every imaginable way. Their services were many – too many to count.

pronunciation

Mirza

mere (rhymes with here) + **zaw** (rhymes with law)

Mahmud

mah (rhymes with man, followed by a long "h" sound) + **mood** (rhymes with food)

Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida wanted nothing more than to be close to Baha'u'llah and to make Him and His followers happy. They wanted to live in Baghdad because that's where Baha'u'llah was living. But they had no money for a house. They could only afford to live in a single room with seven others who also wanted to be near Baha'u'llah. There was hardly room for them to move around in this small room. But still, they were so happy to be close to Baha'u'llah that they thought they were in heaven.

pronunciation

Aqa

awe (rhymes with law) + **gaw** (rhymes with law)

Rida

re (rhymes with red) + **zaw** (rhymes with law)

Sometimes they would chant prayers all through the night. They would chant prayers until the sun would rise. During

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the day, they would go out and work. By nightfall, all together they would have earned a few coins that they would spend on their evening meal.



Some days one would earn a few coins, while the other would not be able to earn anything. On these days, the one who had some money would buy whatever small amount of food that he could afford, and share it with the other seven. Even on these days they were perfectly content with their simple life. Even on these days they were really happy.

When Baha'u'llah left Baghdad and set out for Constantinople, a great caravan of people, including Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida, went with



Him. The caravan traveled a distance of 50 kilometers each day, and rested at night. The travelers faced many hardships. Sometimes they had no food, and many of them fell sick during the journey.

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Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida walked in front of Baha'u'llah's carriage the entire way. After each day's journey, both were always tired and weak. But as soon as the caravan would stop to rest for the night, Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida would begin preparing dinner for everyone. Once everyone had eaten, the two would collect and wash all the dishes and cookware. Most often this



would take them until midnight. Not until this work was finished would they rest. There were times when they had no more than two or three hours

of sleep at night. Then, at daybreak they would wake up, pack everything, and set out again, on foot, in front of the Bahá'u'lláh's carriage.

What an important service they were able to give. What an honor they had - to walk close beside Baha'u'llah - from the start of the journey, at Baghdad, to the end, in Constantinople.

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Aqa Rida and Mirza Mahmud shined with God's love. They were detached from everything but God. These two great men showed us all that is best in life. They made everyone happy. They provided whatever anyone asked for. They never hurt or offended anyone. They were trustworthy, loyal, and truthful.



Because of these things Baha'u'llah showered His love on them. He always asked after them and they were always able to spend time with him. He would always tell them how happy He was with them.

Example Discussion Questions for Story

- › In the story, Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida lived with little comforts of home and their own room. What special qualities did they have? (answer: detachment) Detachment is one of the qualities of being a “true seeker”.
- › Do you know what detachment means? (most will probably say that they don't). It means that we can live without the things we want, but are not necessary to have.
- › If you were with Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida, what do you think you would miss most? (e.g. own room, lots of sleep in a comfortable bed, different kinds of food, etc.)
- › Do you think they also missed the same things as you? If so, why do you think they just didn't leave and go live in a comfortable house?
- › Think of some things that you really really want. Do you think you will be prepared to give up some of your other favorite things to get that special thing? If you are prepared to give them up, then that means you are detached from them.

LESSON 5

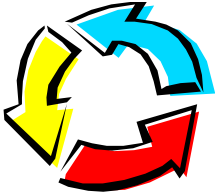
1. What did you like about this lesson? _____

2. Which parts of the lesson did the students like? _____

3. Were the students able to answer the questions asked throughout the lesson? _____

4. Did the level of the lesson match the students' capabilities? _____

5. What would you change or add to the lesson? _____



TO THE PARENTS OF: _____

FROM: _____

DATE: _____

WHAT DID WE DO?



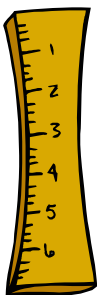
The topic for this session was:

How to Investigate Without Prejudice

The learning objectives were:

- : To understand the spiritual qualities necessary of a "true seeker"
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HOW DID YOUR CHILD DO?



Preparation: [] **Great!** Active participation
[] **Fair.** Passive participation
[] **Poor.** Not active (needs to improve)

Participation: [] **Great!** Active participation
[] **Fair.** Passive participation
[] **Poor.** Not active (needs to improve)

Interaction: [] **Great!** Very understanding and cooperative
[] **Fair.** Occasionally helpful, occasionally disruptive
[] **Poor.** Distractive to others (Needs to improve)

Comments: _____

WHAT'S THE HOMEWORK FOR THE NEXT LESSON?

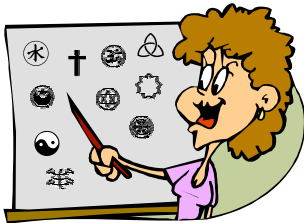


1. Ask everyone to read the Sacred Writing every day with their parents, older siblings, or a friend, and to talk with them about what the passage means to them..

If a man were to declare, "There is a lamp in the next room which gives no light", one hearer might be satisfied with his report, but a wiser man goes into the room to judge for himself, and behold, when he finds the light shining brilliantly in the lamp, he knows the truth!

(Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks)

WHAT WILL WE COVER NEXT SESSION?



Next session we will continue with the topic:

How To Explore Without Prejudice

The learning objectives for the next session will be:

- :: *To perceive the implications for mankind when the knowledge of the principle of the Oneness of God is realized by the people of the world*
- :: *To demonstrate one's belief in the Oneness of God, to develop qualities of humility, love for all people, service, and appreciation of diversity*