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Body

Thine eye is My trust, suffer not the dust of vain desires to becloud its lustre. Thine ear is a sign of My bounty, let not the tumult of unseemly motives turn it away from My Word that encompasseth all creation. Thine heart is My treasury, allow not the treacherous hand of self to rob thee of the pearls which I have treasured therein. Thine hand is a symbol of My loving-kindness, hinder it not from holding fast unto My guarded and hidden Tablets....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh” (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), sec.

152

, p.

322

)

Chastity

They that follow their lusts and corrupt inclinations have erred and dissipated

their efforts. They indeed are of the lost.

(Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, "The Advent of Divine Justice"
(Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984), p.

32

)

Purity and chastity have been, and still are, the most great ornaments for the handmaidens of God. God is My Witness! The brightness of the light of chastity sheddeth its illumination upon the worlds of the spirit, and its fragrance is wafted even unto the Most Exalted Paradise.

(Bahá'u'lláh, cited in "The Advent of Divine Justice", p.

32

)

God hath verily made chastity to be a crown for the heads of His handmaidens. Great is the blessedness of that handmaiden that hath attained unto this great station.

(Bahá'u'lláh, cited in "The Advent of Divine Justice", p.

32

)

Say: He is not to be numbered with the people of Bahá who followeth his mundane desires, or fixeth his heart on things of the earth. He is My true follower who, if he come to a valley of pure gold, will pass straight through it aloof as a cloud, and will neither turn back, nor pause. Such a man is, assuredly, of Me. From his garment the Concourse on high can inhale the fragrance of sanctity.... And if he met the fairest and most comely of women, he would not feel his heart seduced by the least shadow of desire for her beauty. Such an one, indeed, is the creation of spotless chastity. Thus instructeth you the Pen of the Ancient of Days, as bidden by your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful.

("Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", sec.

60

, p.

118

)

As to a chaste and holy life it should be regarded as no less essential a factor that must contribute its proper share to the strengthening and vitalization of the Bahá'í community, upon which must in turn depend the success of any Bahá'í plan or enterprise. In these days when the forces of irreligion are weakening the moral fibre, and undermining the foundations of individual morality, the obligation of chastity and holiness must claim an increasing share of the attention of the American believers, both in their individual capacities and as the responsible custodians of the interests of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. In the discharge of such an obligation, to which

the special circumstances resulting from an excessive and enervating materialism now prevailing in their country lend particular significance, they must play a conspicuous and predominant role. All of them, be they men or women, must, at this threatening hour when the lights of religion are fading out, and its restraints are one by one being abolished, pause to examine themselves, scrutinize their conduct, and with characteristic resolution arise to purge the life of their community of every trace of moral laxity that might stain the name, or impair the integrity, of so holy and precious a Faith.

A chaste and holy life must be made the controlling principle in the behaviour and conduct of all Bahá'ís, both in their social relations with the members of their own community, and in their contact with the world at large. It must adorn and reinforce the ceaseless labours and meritorious exertions of those whose enviable position is to propagate the Message, and to administer the affairs, of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It must be upheld, in all its integrity and implications, in every phase of the life of those who fill the ranks of that Faith, whether in their homes, their travels, their clubs, their societies, their entertainments, their schools, and their universities. It must be accorded special consideration in the conduct of the social activities of every Bahá'í summer school and any other occasions on which Bahá'í community life is organized and fostered. It must be closely and continually identified with the mission of the Bahá'í youth, both as an element in the life of the Bahá'í community, and as a factor in the future progress and orientation of the youth of their own country.

Such a chaste and holy life, with its implications of modesty, purity, temperance, decency, and clean-mindedness, involves no less than the exercise of moderation in all that pertains to dress, language, amusements, and all artistic and literary avocations. It demands daily vigilance in the control of one's carnal desires and corrupt inclinations. It calls for the abandonment of a frivolous conduct, with its excessive attachment to trivial and often misdirected pleasures. It requires total abstinence from all alcoholic drinks, from opium, and from similar habit-forming drugs. It condemns the prostitution of art and of literature, the practices of nudism and of companionate marriage, infidelity in marital relationships, and all manner of promiscuity, of easy familiarity, and of sexual vices. It can tolerate no compromise with the theories, the standards, the habits, and the excesses of a decadent age. Nay rather it seeks to demonstrate, through the dynamic force of its example, the pernicious character of such theories, the falsity of such standards, the hollowness of such claims, the perversity of such habits, and the sacrilegious character of such excesses.

(“The Advent of Divine Justice”, pp.

29

-30)

It must be remembered, however, that the maintenance of such a high standard of moral conduct is not to be associated or confused with any form of asceticism, or of excessive and bigoted puritanism. The standard inculcated by

Bahá'u'lláh, seeks, under no circumstances, to deny anyone the legitimate right and privilege to derive the fullest advantage and benefit from the manifold joys, beauties, and pleasures with which the world has been so plentifully enriched by an All-Loving Creator. "Should a man," Bahá'u'lláh Himself reassures us, "wish to adorn himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the benefits it can bestow, no harm can befall him, if he alloweth nothing whatever to intervene between him and God, for God hath ordained every good thing, whether created in the heavens or in the earth, for such of His servants as truly believe in Him. Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God hath allowed you, and deprive not yourselves from His wondrous bounties. Render thanks and praise unto Him, and be of them that are truly thankful."

("The Advent of Divine Justice", p.

33

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Cleanliness

Wings that are besmirched with mire can never soar....

("Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p.

131

)

When man in all conditions is pure and immaculate, he will become the centre of the reflection of the manifest Light. In all his actions and conduct there must first be purity, then beauty and independence. The channel must be cleansed before it is filled with sweet water. The pure eye comprehendeth the sight and the meeting of God; the pure nostril inhaleteth the perfumes of the rose-garden of bounty; the pure heart becometh the mirror of the beauty of truth. This is why, in the heavenly Books, the divine counsels and commands have been compared to water....

...cleanliness and sanctity, purity and delicacy exalt humanity and make the contingent beings progress. Even when applied to physical things, delicacy causeth the attainment of spirituality, as it is established in the Holy Scriptures.

External cleanliness, although it is but a physical thing, hath a great influence upon spirituality....

("Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas", vol. 3 (Chicago: Bahá'í Publishing Society, 1916), p.

581

)

Confession

...abase not thyself, neither sigh and weep....

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh” (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1985), Persian

no.

44

, p.

37

)

When the sinner findeth himself wholly detached and freed from all save God, he should beg forgiveness and pardon from Him. Confession of sins and transgressions before human beings is not permissible, as it hath never been nor will ever be conducive to divine forgiveness. Moreover such confession before people results in one’s humiliation and abasement, and God -- exalted be His glory -- wisheth not the humiliation of His servants....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”

(Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1988), p.

24

)

Decency

All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization....

To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

109

, p.

215

)

To transgress the limits of one’s own rank and station is, in no wise, permissible. The integrity of every rank and station must needs be preserved. By this is meant that every created thing should be viewed in the light of the station it hath been ordained to occupy.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

93

, p.

188

)

Fortitude

The source of courage and power is the promotion of the Word of God, and steadfastness in His Love.

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.

156

)

O SON OF MAN!

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

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Arabic no.

48

, p.

15

)

Health

...every malady afflicting the body of man is an impediment that preventeth the soul from manifesting its inherent might and power.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

80

, p.

154

)

If the health and well-being of the body be expended in the path of the Kingdom, this is very acceptable and praiseworthy; and if it is expended to the benefit of the human world in general -- even though it be to their material (or bodily) benefit and be a means of doing good -- that is also acceptable. But if the health and welfare of man be spent in sensual desires, in a life on the animal plane, and in devilish pursuits -- then disease is better than such health; nay, death itself is preferable to such a life. If thou art desirous of health, wish thou health for serving the Kingdom....

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 1 (Chicago: Bahá’í Publishing Society, 1909), p.

207

)

Humility

Humility exalteth man to the heaven of glory and power, whilst pride abaseth him to the depths of wretchedness and degradation....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

30

)

Every man of discernment, while walking upon the earth, feeleth indeed abashed, inasmuch as he is fully aware that the thing which is the source of his prosperity, his wealth, his might, his exaltation, his advancement and power is, as ordained by God, the very earth which is trodden beneath the feet of all men. There can be no doubt that whoever is cognizant of this truth, is cleansed and sanctified from all pride, arrogance, and vainglory....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

)

Integrity

The sword of a virtuous character and upright conduct is sharper than blades of steel....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

29

)

This people need no weapons of destruction, inasmuch as they have girded themselves to reconstruct the world. Their hosts are the hosts of goodly deeds, and their arms the arms of upright conduct, and their commander the fear of God....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

74

)

Whoso ariseth, in this Day, to aid Our Cause, and summoneth to his assistance the hosts of a praiseworthy character and upright conduct, the influence flowing from such an action will, most certainly, be diffused throughout the whole world.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

131

, p.

287

)

Liberty

Liberty must, in the end, lead to sedition, whose flames none can quench....

Know ye that the embodiment of liberty and its symbol is the animal. That which besemeth man is submission unto such restraints as will protect him from his own ignorance, and guard him against the harm of the mischief-maker. Liberty causeth man to overstep the bounds of propriety, and to infringe on the dignity of his station. It debaseth him to the level of extreme depravity and wickedness.

...

Say: True liberty consisteth in man’s submission unto My commandments, little as ye know it. Were men to observe that which We have sent down unto them from the Heaven of Revelation, they would, of a certainty, attain unto perfect liberty. Happy is the man that hath apprehended the Purpose of God in whatever He hath revealed from the Heaven of His Will, that pervadeth all created things. Say: The liberty that profiteth you is to be found nowhere except in complete servitude unto God, the Eternal Truth. Whoso hath tasted of its sweetness will refuse to barter it for all the dominion of earth and heaven.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
159
, pp.
335
-36)

Material Goods

Say: Rejoice not in the things ye possess; tonight they are yours, tomorrow others will possess them....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
71
, p.
138
)

O SON OF MAN!

Thou dost wish for gold and I desire thy freedom from it. Thou thinkest thyself rich in its possession, and I recognize thy wealth in thy sanctity therefrom. By My life! This is My knowledge, and that is thy fancy; how can My way accord with thine?

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Arabic no.
56
, pp.
16
-17)

By Him Who shineth above the Dayspring of sanctity! If the whole earth were to be converted into silver and gold, no man who can be said to have truly ascended into the heaven of faith and certitude would deign to regard it, much less to seize and keep it....

(Bahá’u’lláh, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, pp.
23
-24)

Moderation

Whatsoever passeth beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
110
, p.
216
)

Whoso cleaveth to justice, can, under no circumstances, transgress the limits of moderation.... The civilization, so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation,

bring great evil upon men.... If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation....

All other things are subject to this same principle of moderation....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

163

, pp.

342

-43)

Modesty

The fear of God hath ever been a sure defence and a safe stronghold for all the peoples of the world. It is the chief cause of the protection of mankind, and the supreme instrument for its preservation. Indeed, there existeth in man a faculty which deterreth him from, and guardeth him against, whatever is unworthy and unseemly, and which is known as his sense of shame. This, however, is confined to but a few; all have not possessed and do not possess it.

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.

63

)

Patience

He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

66

, p.

129

)

If anyone revile you, or trouble touch you, in the path of God, be patient, and put your trust in Him Who heareth, Who seeth....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

24

)

Purity

We verily behold your actions. If We perceive from them the sweet smelling savour of purity and holiness, We will most certainly bless you....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

141

, p.

307

)

We enjoin the servants of God and His handmaidens to be pure and to fear God,

that they may shake off the slumber of their corrupt desires, and turn toward God...

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.
23
)

The pure heart is one that is entirely cut away from self....

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”,
(London: Bahá’í

Publishing Trust, 1987), p.

107

)

Sanctity

He hath chosen out of the whole world the hearts of His servants, and made them each a seat for the revelation of His glory. Wherefore, sanctify them from every defilement, that the things for which they were created may be engraven upon them....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

136

, p.

297

)

Say: Have mercy on yourselves and on your fellow-men, and suffer not the Cause of God -- a Cause which is immeasurably exalted above the inmost essence of sanctity -- to be sullied with the stain of your idle fancies, your unseemly and corrupt imaginations.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

137

, p.

299

)

Arise, O people, and, by the power of God’s might, resolve to gain the victory over your own selves, that haply the whole earth may be freed and sanctified from its servitude to the gods of its idle fancies -- gods that have inflicted such loss upon, and are responsible for the misery of, their wretched worshippers. These idols form the obstacle that impedeth man in his efforts to advance in the path of perfection....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

43

, p.

93

)

Self-Knowledge

He hath known God who hath known himself.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

90

, p.

178

)

...man should know his own self and recognize that which leadeth unto loftiness or lowliness, glory or abasement, wealth or poverty. Having attained the stage of fulfilment and reached his maturity, man standeth in need of wealth...

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.

35

)

O My servants! Could ye apprehend with what wonders of My munificence and bounty I have willed to entrust your souls, ye would, of a truth, rid yourselves of attachment to all created things, and would gain a true knowledge of your own selves -- a knowledge which is the same as the comprehension of Mine own Being. Ye would find yourselves independent of all else but Me, and would perceive, with your inner and outer eye, and as manifest as the revelation of My effulgent Name, the seas of My loving-kindness and bounty moving within you....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

153

, pp.

326

-27)

Selflessness

The station of absolute self-surrender transcendeth, and will ever remain exalted above, every other station.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

160

, p.

338

)

Be light and untrammelled as the breeze, that ye may obtain admittance into the precincts of My court, My inviolable Sanctuary.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

152

, p.

323

)

Say: Deliver your souls, O people, from the bondage of self, and purify them from all attachment to anything besides Me. Remembrance of Me cleanseth all things from defilement, could ye but perceive it...

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

136

, pp.

294

-95)

All these wishes are well worthy of asking. Especially the rescue from self-love. This is a strange trait and the means of the destruction of many important souls in the world. If man be imbued with all good qualities but be selfish, all the other virtues will fade or pass away and eventually he will grow worse.

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 1, p.

136

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It behoveth thee to sever thyself from all desires save thy Lord, the Supreme, expecting no help or aid from anyone in the universe...

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 1, p.

97

)

Sincerity

He [the true seeker] should not wish for others that which he doth not wish for himself, nor promise that which he doth not fulfil....

(“Kitáb-i-Íqán”, (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), p.

194

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Expect not that they who violate the ordinances of God will be trustworthy or sincere in the faith they profess. Avoid them, and preserve strict guard over thyself, lest their devices and mischief hurt thee....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

114

, p.

233

)

Take heed, O people, lest ye be of them that give good counsel to others but forget to follow it themselves. The words of such as these, and beyond the words the realities of all things, and beyond these realities the angels that are nigh unto God, bring against them the accusation of falsehood.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

128

, p.
277

)

...it is incumbent upon thee to be purely sincere, to turn to the holy Kingdom and to generously give the spirit in the cause of the Lord of Might. Verily, this is no other than an eternal and everlasting life which hath no end in the world of existence.

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 3 (Chicago: Bahá’í Publishing Society, 1916), p.

620

)

Sleep

...man must become evanescent in God. Must forget his own selfish conditions that he may thus arise to the station of sacrifice. It should be to such a degree that if he sleep, it should not be for pleasure, but to rest the body in order to do better, to speak better, to explain more beautifully, to serve the servants of God and to prove the truths. When he remains awake, he should seek to be attentive, serve the Cause of God and sacrifice his own stations for those of God. When he attains to this station, the confirmations of the Holy Spirit will surely reach him, and man with this power can withstand all who inhabit the earth.

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 3, p.

460

)

Temperance

Drink ye, O handmaidens of God, the Mystic Wine from the cup of My words. Cast away, then, from you that which your minds abhor, for it hath been forbidden unto you in His Tablets and His Scriptures. Beware lest ye barter away the River that is life indeed for that which the souls of the pure-hearted detest. Become ye intoxicated with the wine of the love of God, and not with that which deadeneth your minds, O ye that adore Him! Verily, it hath been forbidden unto every believer, whether man or woman....

(Bahá’u’lláh, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p.

33

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The drinking of wine is, according to the text of the Most Holy Book, forbidden; for it is the cause of chronic diseases, weakeneth the nerves, and consumeth the mind.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p.

33

)

World

O SON OF BEING!

Busy not thyself with this world, for with fire We test the gold, and with gold
We test Our servants.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Arabic no.

55

, p.

16

)

Say: If ye be seekers after this life and the vanities thereof, ye should have sought them while ye were still enclosed in your mothers’ wombs, for at that time ye were continually approaching them, could ye but perceive it. Ye have, on the other hand, ever since ye were born and attained maturity, been all the while receding from the world and drawing closer to dust. Why, then, exhibit such greed in amassing the treasures of the earth, when your days are numbered and your chance is well-nigh lost? Will ye not, then, O heedless ones, shake off your slumber?

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

66

, p.

127

)

The world is but a show, vain and empty, a mere nothing, bearing the semblance of reality. Set not your affections upon it. Break not the bond that uniteth you with your Creator, and be not of those that have erred and strayed from His ways. Verily I say, the world is like the vapour in a desert, which the thirsty dreameth to be water and striveth after it with all his might, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth it to be mere illusion. It may, moreover, be likened unto the lifeless image of the beloved whom the lover hath sought and found, in the end, after long search and to his utmost regret, to be such as cannot “fatten nor appease his hunger”.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

153

, pp.

328

-29)

Kindliness

Rectitude of Conduct

This rectitude of conduct, with its implications of justice, equity, truthfulness, honesty, fair-mindedness, reliability, and trustworthiness, must distinguish every phase of the life of the Bahá’í community....

(“The Advent of Divine Justice”, p.

23

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Such a rectitude of conduct must manifest itself, with ever-increasing potency, in every verdict which the elected representatives of the Bahá’í community, in whatever capacity they may find themselves, may be called upon to pronounce. It must be constantly reflected in the business dealings of all its members, in their domestic lives, in all manner of employment, and in any service they may, in the future, render their government or people. It must be exemplified in the conduct of all Bahá’í electors, when exercising their sacred rights and functions. It must characterize the attitude of every loyal believer towards non-acceptance of political posts, non-identification with political parties, non-participation in political controversies, and non-membership in political organizations and

ecclesiastical institutions. It must reveal itself in the uncompromising adherence of all, whether young or old, to the clearly enunciated and fundamental principles laid down by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His addresses, and to the laws and ordinances revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in His Most Holy Book. It must be demonstrated in the impartiality of every defender of the Faith against its enemies, in his fair-mindedness in recognizing any merits that enemy may possess, and in his honesty in discharging any obligations he may have towards him. It must constitute the brightest ornament of the life, the pursuits, the exertions, and the utterances of every Bahá’í teacher, whether labouring at home or abroad, whether in the front ranks of the teaching force, or occupying a less active and responsible position. It must be made the hallmark of that numerically small, yet intensely dynamic and highly responsible body of the elected national representatives of every Bahá’í community, which constitutes the sustaining pillar, and the sole instrument for the election, in every community, of that Universal House whose very name and title, as ordained by Bahá’u’lláh, symbolizes that rectitude of conduct which is its highest mission to safeguard and enforce.

So great and transcendental is this principle of Divine justice, a principle that must be regarded as the crowning distinction of all Local and National Assemblies, in their capacity as forerunners of the Universal House of Justice, that Bahá’u’lláh Himself subordinates His personal inclination and wish to the all-compelling force of its demands and implications. “God is My witness!” He thus explains, “were it not contrary to the Law of God, I would have kissed the hand of My would-be murderer, and would cause him to inherit My earthly goods. I am restrained, however, by the binding Law laid down in the Book, and am Myself bereft of all worldly possessions.”...

(“The Advent of Divine Justice”, pp.

26

-27)

Small wonder, therefore, that the Author of the Bahá’í Revelation should

have chosen to associate the name and title of that House, which is to be the crowning glory of His administrative institutions, not with forgiveness but with justice, to have made justice the only basis and the permanent foundation of His Most Great Peace, and to have proclaimed it in His Hidden Words as “the best beloved of all things” in His sight....

(“The Advent of Divine Justice”, pp.

28

-29)

Animals

He [the true seeker] should show kindness to animals, how much more unto his fellow-man, to him who is endowed with the power of utterance....

(“Kitáb-i-Iqán”, p.

194

)

...what difference is there when it cometh to physical sensations? The feelings are one and the same, whether ye inflict pain on man or on beast. There is no difference here whatever. And indeed ye do worse to harm an animal, for man hath a language, he can lodge a complaint, he can cry out and moan; if injured he can have recourse to the authorities and these will protect him from his aggressor. But the hapless beast is mute, able neither to express its hurt nor take its case to the authorities.... Therefore is it essential that ye show forth the utmost consideration to the animal, and that ye be even kinder to him than to your fellow-man.

Train your children from their earliest days to be infinitely tender and loving to animals....

(“Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá”, (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre, 1982),

sec.

138

, p.

159

)

Association

Consort with all men, O people of Bahá, in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

15

)

Do not be satisfied until each one with whom you are concerned is to you as a member of your family. Regard each one either as a father, or as a brother, or as a sister, or as a mother, or as a child. If you can attain to this, your

difficulties will vanish, you will know what to do....

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p.
91
)

When you love a member of your family or a compatriot, let it be with a ray of the Infinite Love! Let it be in God, and for God! Wherever you find the attributes of God love that person, whether he be of your family or of another. Shed the light of a boundless love on every human being whom you meet...

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,
10th ed. (London: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1979), p.
38
)

Bad Language

It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart...

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
7
, p.
11
)

Defile not your tongues with the cursing and reviling of any soul, and guard your eyes against that which is not seemly....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.
27
)

...the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk. God hath forgiven what is past. Henceforward everyone should utter that which is meet and seemly, and should refrain from slander, abuse and whatever causeth sadness in men....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, pp.
219
-20)

Charity

Charity is pleasing and praiseworthy in the sight of God and is regarded as a prince among goodly deeds.... Viewed in this light, the blessed utterance above is, in truth, the day-star of utterances. Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself. Verily, such a man is reckoned, by virtue of the Will of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, with the people of Bahá who dwell in the Crimson Ark.

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.

)

They who are possessed of riches, however, must have the utmost regard for the poor, for great is the honour destined by God for those poor who are steadfast in patience. By My life! There is no honour, except what God may please to bestow, that can compare to this honour. Great is the blessedness awaiting the poor that endure patiently and conceal their sufferings, and well is it with the rich who bestow their riches on the needy and prefer them before themselves.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

100

, p.

202

)

...when a person performs a good action, although it is praiseworthy, if it is not caused by the love and knowledge of God, it is imperfect....

(“Some Answered Questions”, (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1984),

p.

304

)

Children

Everyone, whether man or woman, should hand over to a trusted person a portion of what he or she earneth through trade, agriculture or other occupation, for the training and education of children, to be spent for this purpose with the knowledge of the Trustees of the House of Justice.

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.

90

)

Unto every father hath been enjoined the instruction of his son and daughter in the art of reading and writing and in all that hath been laid down in the Holy Tablet.... He that bringeth up his son or the son of another, it is as though he hath brought up a son of Mine...

(“A Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book of Bahá’u’lláh” (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre, 1973), sec.

8

, pp.

15

-16)

Schools must first train the children in the principles of religion, so that the Promise and the Threat recorded in the Books of God may prevent them from the things forbidden and adorn them with the mantle of the commandments; but this in such a measure that it may not injure the children by resulting in

ignorant fanaticism and bigotry.

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.
68
)

Do all you can to encourage spirituality in them [children].

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p.
111
)

It is the duty of all to look after the children. Those without children should, if possible, make themselves responsible for the education of a child.

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p.
91
)

Compassion

To look after the sick is one of the greatest duties. Every soul who becomes sick, the other friends should certainly offer the life (of service) in the utmost kindness.

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 1, p.
149
)

We should all visit the sick. When they are in sorrow and suffering, it is a real help and benefit to have a friend come. Happiness is a great healer to those who are ill. In the East it is the custom to call upon the patient often and meet him individually. The people in the East show the utmost kindness and compassion to the sick and suffering. This has greater effect than the remedy itself. You must always have this thought of love and affection when you visit the ailing and afflicted.

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912”, 2nd. ed.
(Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1982), p.
204
)

Courtesy

We, verily, have chosen courtesy, and made it the true mark of such as are nigh unto Him. Courtesy is, in truth, a raiment which fitteth all men, whether young or old. Well is it with him that adorneth his temple therewith, and woe unto him who is deprived of this great bounty....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.
50
)

O people of God! I admonish you to observe courtesy, for above all else it is the prince of virtues. Well is it with him who is illumined with the light of courtesy and is attired with the vesture of uprightness. Whoso is endued with courtesy hath indeed attained a sublime station....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.

88

)

Defence of the Cause

It is incumbent upon all men, each according to his ability, to refute the arguments of those that have attacked the Faith of God.... If any man were to arise to defend, in his writings, the Cause of God against its assailants, such a man, however inconsiderable his share, shall be so honoured in the world to come that the Concourse on high would envy his glory. No pen can depict the loftiness of his station, neither can any tongue describe its splendour. For whosoever standeth firm and steadfast in this holy, this glorious, and exalted Revelation, such power shall be given him as to enable him to face and withstand all that is in heaven and on earth....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

154

, pp.

329

-30)

Detraction

O SON OF MAN!

Breathe not the sins of others so long as thou art thyself a sinner. Shouldst thou transgress this command, accursed wouldst thou be, and to this I bear witness.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Arabic no.

27

, p.

10

)

O EMIGRANTS!

The tongue I have designed for the mention of Me, defile it not with detraction. If the fire of self overcome you, remember your own faults and not the faults of My creatures, inasmuch as every one of you knoweth his own self better than he knoweth others.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.

66

, p.

45

)

O COMPANION OF MY THRONE!

Hear no evil, and see no evil, abase not thyself, neither sigh and weep. Speak no evil, that thou mayest not hear it spoken unto thee, and magnify not the faults of others that thine own faults may not appear great; and wish not the abasement of anyone, that thine own abasement be not exposed....

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.

44

, p.

37

)

Beware lest ye offend the feelings of anyone, or sadden the heart of any person, or move the tongue in reproach of and finding fault with anybody... Beware, beware that any one rebuke or reproach a soul, though he may be an ill-wisher and an ill-doer....

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 1, p.

45

)

Disputation

They that dispute, as prompted by their desires, are indeed wrapped in a palpable veil....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

55

)

Beware lest ye contend with any one, nay, strive to make him aware of the truth with kindly manner and most convincing exhortation. If your hearer respond, he will have responded to his own behoof, and if not, turn ye away from him, and set your faces towards God’s sacred Court, the seat of resplendent holiness.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

128

, p.

279

)

All these discords and disputes which we hear on all sides only tend to increase materiality.

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,

p.

122

)

Dissension

The religion of God is for love and unity; make it not the cause of enmity or dissension....

...

Conflict and contention are categorically forbidden in His Book....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, pp.

220

-21)

Nothing whatever can, in this Day, inflict a greater harm upon this Cause than dissension and strife, contention, estrangement and apathy, among the loved ones of God....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

5

, p.

9

)

O ye friends of God! Beware! Beware of differences! By differences the Temple of God is razed to its very foundation, and by the blowing of the winds of disagreement the Blessed Tree is prevented from producing any fruit. By the intense cold of the diversity of opinions the rose-garden of Unity is withered, and the fire of the love of God is extinguished!

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 2, p.

431

)

Equity

Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbours....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

146

, p.

315

)

Be fair to yourselves and to others, that the evidences of justice may be revealed through your deeds among Our faithful servants.

(Bahá’u’lláh, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p.

25

)

...equity is the most fundamental among human virtues. The evaluation of all things must needs depend upon it....

...

Say: Observe equity in your judgment, ye men of understanding heart! He that is

unjust in his judgment is destitute of the characteristics that distinguish man's station....

("Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", sec.

100

, pp.

203

-4)

Fidelity

The soul that hath remained faithful to the Cause of God, and stood unwaveringly firm in His Path shall, after his ascension, be possessed of such power that all the worlds which the Almighty hath created can benefit through him. Such a soul provideth, at the bidding of the Ideal King and Divine Educator, the pure leaven that leaveneth the world of being, and furnisheth the power through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest. Consider how meal needeth leaven to be leavened with. Those souls that are the symbols of detachment are the leaven of the world....

("Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", sec.

82

, p.

161

)

Friendliness

We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship. Thus counselleth you the All-Knowing, the Faithful. We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us....

("Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", sec.

146

, pp.

315

-16)

Show forbearance and benevolence and love to one another. Should any one among you be incapable of grasping a certain truth, or be striving to comprehend it, show forth, when conversing with him, a spirit of extreme kindness and good-will. Help him to see and recognize the truth, without esteeming yourself to be, in the least, superior to him, or to be possessed of greater endowments.

("Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", sec.

5

, p.

8

)

Generosity

O YE RICH ONES ON EARTH!

The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own ease.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.

54

, p.

41

)

If ye encounter one who is poor, treat him not disdainfully. Reflect upon that whereof ye were created. Every one of you was created of a sorry germ.

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

55

)

O CHILDREN OF DUST!

Tell the rich of the midnight sighing of the poor, lest heedlessness lead them into the path of destruction, and deprive them of the Tree of Wealth. To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.

49

, p.

39

)

Good Character

The companions of God are, in this day, the lump that must leaven the peoples of the world. They must show forth such trustworthiness, such truthfulness and perseverance, such deeds and character that all mankind may profit by their example.

(Bahá’u’lláh, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p.

23

)

The purpose of the one true God in manifesting Himself is to summon all mankind to truthfulness and sincerity, to piety and trustworthiness, to resignation and submissiveness to the Will of God, to forbearance and kindness, to uprightness and wisdom. His object is to array every man with the mantle of a saintly character, and to adorn him with the ornament of holy and goodly deeds.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

137

, p.
299

)

The most vital duty, in this day, is to purify your characters, to correct your manners, and improve your conduct. The beloved of the Merciful must show forth such character and conduct among His creatures, that the fragrance of their holiness may be shed upon the whole world, and may quicken the dead, inasmuch as the purpose of the Manifestation of God and the dawning of the limitless lights of the Invisible is to educate the souls of men, and refine the character of every living man....

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p.

26

)

A good character is, verily, the best mantle for men from God. With it He adorneth the temples of His loved ones. By My life! The light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the radiance thereof. Whoso attaineth unto it is accounted as a jewel among men. The glory and the upliftment of the world must needs depend upon it. A goodly character is a means whereby men are guided to the Straight Path and are led to the Great Announcement....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.

36

)

Gossip

They have preferred to have their heads cut off rather than utter one unseemly word....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

74

)

According to the direct and sacred command of God we are forbidden to utter slander...

(“Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1971), p.

8

)

Remember, above all, the teaching of Bahá’u’lláh concerning gossip and unseemly talk about others. Stories repeated about others are seldom good. A silent tongue is the safest. Even good may be harmful, if spoken at the wrong time, or to the wrong person.

(“‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p.

125

)

Honesty

This Wronged One enjoineeth on you honesty and piety. Blessed the city that shineth by their light. Through them man is exalted, and the door of security is unlocked before the face of all creation....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

23

)

They who dwell within the Tabernacle of God, and are established upon the seats of everlasting glory, will refuse, though they be dying of hunger, to stretch their hands, and seize unlawfully the property of their neighbour, however vile and worthless he may be....

(Bahá’u’lláh, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p.

24

)

Hospitality

...welcome all with the light of oneness.

(Bahá’u’lláh, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p.

37

)

When a man turns his face to God he finds sunshine everywhere. All men are his brothers. Let not conventionality cause you to seem cold and unsympathetic when you meet strange people from other countries. Do not look at them as though you suspected them of being evil-doers, thieves and boors. You think it necessary to be very careful, not to expose yourselves to the risk of making acquaintance with such, possibly, undesirable people.

I ask you not to think only of yourselves. Be kind to the strangers, whether come they from Turkey, Japan, Persia, Russia, China or any other country in the world.

Help to make them feel at home; find out where they are staying, ask if you may render them any service; try to make their lives a little happier.

In this way, even if, sometimes, what you at first suspected should be true, still go out of your way to be kind to them -- this kindness will help them to become better.

After all, why should any foreign people be treated as strangers?

Let those who meet you know, without your proclaiming the fact, that you are indeed a Bahá’í.

Put into practice the Teaching of Bahá’u’lláh, that of kindness to all nations. Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, let your

heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path.

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by Bahá’u’lláh in Paris in 1911-1912”,
pp.
15
-16)

Justice

O SON OF SPIRIT!

The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom
if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid
thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and
shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy
neighbour....

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Arabic no.
2
, pp.
3
-4)

He will never deal unjustly with any one, neither will He task a soul beyond
its power....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
52
, p.
106
)

The light of men is Justice. Quench it not with the contrary winds of
oppression and tyranny. The purpose of justice is the appearance of unity among
men.

(Bahá’u’lláh, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, pp.
27
-28)

O SON OF SPIRIT!

Know thou of a truth: He that biddeth men be just and himself committeth
iniquity is not of Me, even though he bear My name.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Arabic no.
28
, p.
10
)

Lay not aside the fear of God, O kings of the earth, and beware that ye
transgress not the bounds which the Almighty hath fixed. Observe the

injunctions laid upon you in His Book, and take good heed not to overstep their limits. Be vigilant, that ye may not do injustice to anyone, be it to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily, is the straight path.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

118

, p.

250

)

The canopy of existence resteth upon the pole of justice, and not of forgiveness, and the life of mankind dependeth on justice and not on forgiveness.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p.

28

)

Each man has been placed in a post of honour, which he must not desert. A humble workman who commits an injustice is as much to blame as a renowned tyrant. Thus we all have our choice between justice and injustice.

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,

p.

160

)

Kindliness

A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the spirit, it clotheth the words with meaning, it is the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding.

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

15

)

Do not distress or deny anyone by saying “He is not a Bahá’í!” He will be known by his deeds. There are no secrets among Bahá’ís; a Bahá’í does not hide anything.

(“‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p.

98

)

Love for Man

Each sees in the other the Beauty of God reflected in the soul, and finding this point of similarity, they are attracted to one another in love. This love will make all men the waves of one sea, this love will make them all the stars of one heaven and the fruits of one tree. This love will bring the realization of true accord, the foundation of real unity.

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,
pp.
180
-81)

Love is unlimited, boundless, infinite! Material things are limited, circumscribed, finite. You cannot adequately express infinite love by limited means.

The perfect love needs an unselfish instrument, absolutely freed from fetters of every kind. The love of family is limited; the tie of blood relationship is not the strongest bond. Frequently members of the same family disagree, and even hate each other.

Patriotic love is finite; the love of one’s country causing hatred of all others, is not perfect love! Compatriots also are not free from quarrels amongst themselves.

The love of race is limited; there is some union here, but that is insufficient. Love must be free from boundaries!

To love our own race may mean hatred of all others, and even people of the same race often dislike each other.

Political love also is much bound up with hatred of one party for another; this love is very limited and uncertain.

The love of community of interest in service is likewise fluctuating; frequently competitions arise, which lead to jealousy, and at length hatred replaces love.

A few years ago, Turkey and Italy had a friendly political understanding; now they are at war!

All these ties of love are imperfect. It is clear that limited material ties are insufficient to adequately express the universal love.

The great unselfish love for humanity is bounded by none of these imperfect, semi-selfish bonds; this is the one perfect love, possible to all mankind, and can only be achieved by the power of the Divine Spirit....

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,
pp.
36
-37)

Loyalty

A just king is the shadow of God on earth. All should seek shelter under the shadow of his justice, and rest in the shade of his favour....

(Bahá’u’lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, “The Promised Day is Come”
(Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1980), p.

)

In every country where any of this people reside, they must behave towards the government of that country with loyalty, honesty and truthfulness....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, pp.

22

-23)

Regard for the rank of sovereigns is divinely ordained, as is clearly attested by the words of the Prophets of God and His chosen ones. He Who is the Spirit (Jesus) -- may peace be upon Him -- was asked: “O Spirit of God! Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?” And He made reply: “Yea, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” He forbade it not. These two sayings are, in the estimation of men of insight, one and the same, for if that which belonged to Caesar had not come from God, He would have forbidden it....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, pp.

89

-90)

Malice

O MY SERVANT!

Purge thy heart from malice and, innocent of envy, enter the divine court of holiness.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.

42

, p.

36

)

...the tongue is a smouldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endure a century.

...backbiting quencheth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul....

(“Kitáb-i-Iqán”, p.

193

)

Meekness

If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name’s sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

146

, p.
315
)

The confirmations of the Spirit are all those powers and gifts which some are born with (and which men sometimes call genius), but for which others have to strive with infinite pains. They come to that man or woman who accepts his life with radiant acquiescence.

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p.
121
)

Mercy

O son of man! If thine eyes be turned towards mercy, forsake the things that profit thee and cleave unto that which will profit mankind. And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbour that which thou choosest for thyself....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.
64
)

Obedience

To none is given the right to act in any manner that would run counter to the considered views of them who are in authority....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
115
, p.
241
)

What mankind needeth in this day is obedience unto them that are in authority, and a faithful adherence to the cord of wisdom....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
102
, p.
207
)

Lay not on any soul a load which ye would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for any one the things ye would not desire for yourselves....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
66
, p.
128
)

The

Law

must reign, and not the individual; thus will the world become a place of beauty and true brotherhood will be realized. Having attained solidarity, men will have found truth.

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,

p.

132

)

Parents

The journeys in the pathway of love are reckoned as four: From the creatures to the True One; from the True One to the creatures; from the creatures to the creatures; from the True One to the True One.

...

...let thine Eminence consider his own self; thou art first in relation to thy son, last in relation to thy father. In thine outward appearance, thou tellest of the appearance of power in the realms of divine creation; in thine inward being thou revealest the hidden mysteries which are the divine trust deposited within thee....

(“The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys”, 3rd ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1986), pp.

25

,

27

)

Be the son of thy father and be the fruit of that tree. Be a son that hath been born of his soul and heart and not only of the water and clay. A real son is such an one as hath branched from the spiritual part of a man....

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 2, p.

342

)

Politics

Of old it hath been revealed: “Love of one’s country is an element of the Faith of God.” The Tongue of Grandeur hath, however, in the day of His manifestation proclaimed: “It is not his to boast who loveth his country, but it is his who loveth the world.”...

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

43

, p.

95

)

...He [Bahá'u'lláh] hath forbidden them to interfere at all with political problems. He hath even prohibited the believers from discussing political affairs.

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 3, p. 498)

The friends may vote, if they can do it without identifying themselves with one party or another. To enter the arena of party politics is surely detrimental to the best interests of the Faith and will harm the Cause. It remains for the individuals to so use their right to vote as to keep aloof from party politics, and always bear in mind that they are voting on the merits of the individual, rather than because he belongs to one party or another....

(From a letter dated 16 March 1933 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

Sacrifice

To have sacrificed my life for the Manifestations of Thy Self, to have offered up my soul in the path of the Revealers of Thy wondrous Beauty, is to have sacrificed my spirit for Thy Spirit, my being for Thy Being, my glory for Thy glory. It is as if I had offered up all these things for Thy sake, and for the sake of Thy loved ones.

Though my body be pained by the trials that befall me from Thee, though it be afflicted by the revelations of Thy Decree, yet my soul rejoiceth at having partaken of the waters of Thy Beauty, and at having attained the shores of the ocean of Thine eternity. Doth it beseem a lover to flee from his beloved, or to desert the object of his heart's desire? Nay, we all believe in Thee, and eagerly hope to enter Thy presence.

(“Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh” (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), sec.

60
, pp.
95
-96)

One day some soldiers came to the house of a Bahá'í and demanded that one of the guests should be given up for execution, according to their warrant. The host took his guest's place and died in his stead.

(“Abdu'l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p. 53)

Seclusion

Living in seclusion or practising asceticism is not acceptable in the presence of God.... Deprive not yourselves of the bounties which have been created for

your sake.

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.
71
)

Seclude yourselves in the stronghold of My love. This, truly, is the seclusion that befitteth you, could ye but know it. He that secludeth himself in his house is indeed as one dead. It behoveth man to show forth that which will benefit mankind. He that bringeth forth no fruit is fit for the fire....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.
49
)

Self-Expression

O MY SERVANT!

Thou art even as a finely tempered sword concealed in the darkness of its sheath and its value hidden from the artificer’s knowledge. Wherefore come forth from the sheath of self and desire that thy worth may be made resplendent and manifest unto all the world.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.
72
, p.
47
)

...no soul must either publicly or privately utter one word against or in contradiction to the general Teachings...

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 2, p.
432
)

...at the very root of the Cause lies the principle of the undoubted right of the individual to self-expression, his freedom to declare his conscience and set forth his views....

(From a letter dated 23 February 1924 written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá’ís of America, published in “Bahá’í Administration: Selected Messages 1922-1932” (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1980), p.
63
)

Service

That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
117

, p.
250
)

O people of God! Do not busy yourselves in your own concerns; let your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
43

, pp.
93
-94)

...service in love for mankind is unity with God. He who serves has already entered the Kingdom and is seated at the right hand of his Lord.

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace”, p.
186
)

Service is prayer....

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,
p.
177
)

Rise! and serve the Power of God!

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,
p.
168
)

The service of the friends belongs to God, not to them....

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 1, p.
61
)

Sex

Enter ye into wedlock, that after you another may arise in your stead. We, verily, have forbidden you lechery, and not that which is conducive to fidelity. Have ye clung unto the promptings of your nature, and cast behind your backs the statutes of God? Fear ye God, and be not of the foolish. But for man, who, on My earth, would remember Me, and how could My attributes and My names be revealed?...

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.
49
)

Sex, in its relation to the exigencies of the physical plane, has no connection with the Spirit....

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p. 81)

But in the sight of God sex makes no difference. He or she is greatest who is nearest to God.

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p. 105)

If women received the same educational advantages as those of men, the result would demonstrate the equality of capacity of both for scholarship.

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”, p. 161)

Sympathy

O SON OF MAN!

Deny not My servant should he ask anything from thee, for his face is My face; be then abashed before Me.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Arabic no. 30 , p. 11)

Let your principal concern be to rescue the fallen from the slough of impending extinction, and to help him embrace the ancient Faith of God....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec. 147 , p. 316)

Trustworthiness

Deal not treacherously with the substance of your neighbour. Be ye trustworthy on earth, and withhold not from the poor the things given unto you by God through His grace. He, verily, will bestow upon you the double of what ye possess....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, pp. 54 -55)

Know thou for a certainty that whoso disbelieveth in God is neither trustworthy nor truthful. This, indeed, is the truth, the undoubted truth. He that acteth treacherously towards God will, also, act treacherously towards his king. Nothing whatever can deter such a man from evil, nothing can hinder him from betraying his neighbour, nothing can induce him to walk uprightly.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

114

, pp.

232

-33)

Show ye an endeavour that all the nations and communities of the world, even the enemies, put their trust, assurance and hope in you; that if a person falls into errors for a hundred-thousand times he may yet turn his face to you, hopeful that you will forgive his sins; for he must not become hopeless, neither grieved nor despondent....

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 2, p.

436

)

Truthfulness

Fair speech and truthfulness, by reason of their lofty rank and position, are regarded as a sun shining above the horizon of knowledge....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.

40

)

They who are the people of God have no ambition except to revive the world, to ennoble its life, and regenerate its peoples. Truthfulness and good-will have, at all times, marked their relations with all men. Their outward conduct is but a reflection of their inward life, and their inward life a mirror of their outward conduct....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

126

, pp.

270

-71)

Truthfulness is the foundation of all the virtues of the world of humanity. Without truthfulness, progress and success in all of the worlds of God are impossible for a soul. When this holy attribute is established in man, all the divine qualities will also become realized.

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 2, p.

459

)

Vengeance

...vengeance ... is ... blameworthy, because through vengeance no good result is gained by the avenger. So if a man strikes another, and he who is struck takes revenge by returning the blow, what advantage will he gain? Will this be a balm for his wound or a remedy for his pain? No, God forbid! In truth the two actions are the same: both are injuries; the only difference is that one occurred first, and the other afterward. Therefore, if he who is struck forgives, nay, if he acts in a manner contrary to that which has been used toward him, this is laudable....

(“Some Answered Questions” (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1984),

p.

267

)

...when Christ said: “Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left one also”,¹ it was for the purpose of teaching men not to take personal revenge. He did not mean that, if a wolf should fall upon a flock of sheep and wish to destroy it, the wolf should be encouraged to do so. No, if Christ had known that a wolf had entered the fold and was about to destroy the sheep, most certainly He would have prevented it.

(“Some Answered Questions”, p.

270

)

Violence

There is no glory for him that committeth disorder on the earth after it hath been made so good....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

24

)

Spread not disorder in the land, and shed not the blood of any one, and consume not the substance of others wrongfully, neither follow every accursed prattler.

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

25

)

Fighting, and the employment of force, even for the right cause, will not bring about good results. The oppressed who have right on their side, must not take that right by force; the evil would continue. Hearts must be changed....

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p.

92

)

War

I charge you all that each one of you concentrate all the thoughts of your heart on love and unity. When a thought of war comes, oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love. Thoughts of war bring destruction to all harmony, well-being, restfulness and content.

Thoughts of love are constructive of brotherhood, peace, friendship, and happiness.

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,
p.
29
)

How is it possible for men to fight from morning until evening, killing each other, shedding the blood of their fellow-men: And for what object? To gain possession of a part of the earth! Even the animals, when they fight, have an immediate and more reasonable cause for their attacks! How

1 Cf. Matthew 5:39.

terrible it is that men, who are of the higher kingdom, can descend to slaying and bringing misery to their fellow-beings, for the possession of a tract of land!

The highest of created beings fighting to obtain the lowest form of matter, earth! Land belongs not to one people, but to all people. This earth is not man’s home, but his tomb....

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912
“, p.
28
)

Radiance

Unity

The consciousness of any division or cleavage in its ranks is alien to its very purpose, principles, and ideals. Once its members have fully recognized the claim of its Author, and, by identifying themselves with its Administrative Order, accepted unreservedly the principles and laws embodied in its teachings, every differentiation of class, creed, or colour must automatically be obliterated, and never be allowed, under any pretext, and however great the pressure of events or of public opinion, to reassert itself. If any discrimination is at all to be tolerated, it should be a discrimination not against, but rather in favour of the minority, be it racial or otherwise. Unlike the nations and peoples of the earth, be they of the East or of the West, democratic or authoritarian, communist or capitalist, whether belonging to the Old World or the New, who either ignore, trample upon, or extirpate, the racial, religious, or political minorities within the sphere of their jurisdiction, every organized community enlisted under the banner of

Bahá'u'lláh should feel it to be its first and inescapable obligation to nurture, encourage, and safeguard every minority belonging to any faith, race, class, or nation within it. So great and vital is this principle that in such circumstances, as when an equal number of ballots have been cast in an election, or where the qualifications for any office are balanced as between the various races, faiths or nationalities within the community, priority should unhesitatingly be accorded the party representing the minority, and this for no other reason except to stimulate and encourage it, and afford it an opportunity to further the interests of the community. In the light of this principle, and bearing in mind the extreme desirability of having the minority elements participate and share responsibility in the conduct of Bahá'í activity, it should be the duty of every Bahá'í community so to arrange its affairs that in cases where individuals belonging to the divers minority elements within it are already qualified and fulfil the necessary requirements, Bahá'í representative institutions, be they Assemblies, conventions, conferences, or committees, may have represented on them as many of these divers elements, racial or otherwise, as possible. The adoption of such a course, and faithful adherence to it, would not only be a source of inspiration and encouragement to those elements that are numerically small and inadequately represented, but would demonstrate to the world at large the universality and representative character of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and the freedom of His followers from the taint of those prejudices which have already wrought such havoc in the domestic affairs, as well as the foreign relationships, of the nations.

(“The Advent of Divine Justice”, pp.

35

-36)

Of these spiritual prerequisites of success, which constitute the bedrock on which the security of all teaching plans, Temple projects, and financial schemes, must ultimately rest, the following stand out as pre-eminent and vital, which the members of the American Bahá'í community will do well to ponder. Upon the extent to which these basic requirements are met, and the manner in which the American believers fulfil them in their individual lives, administrative activities, and social relationships, must depend the measure of the manifold blessings which the All-Bountiful Possessor can vouchsafe to them all. These requirements are none other than a high sense of moral rectitude in their social and administrative activities, absolute chastity in their individual lives, and complete freedom from prejudice in their dealings with peoples of a different race, class, creed, or colour.

(“The Advent of Divine Justice”, pp.

21

-22)

A rectitude of conduct, an abiding sense of undeviating justice, unobscured by the demoralizing influences which a corruption-ridden political life so

strikingly manifests; a chaste, pure, and holy life, unsullied and unclouded by the indecencies, the vices, the false standards, which an inherently deficient moral code tolerates, perpetuates, and fosters; a fraternity freed from that cancerous growth of racial prejudice, which is eating into the vitals of an already debilitated society -- these are the ideals which the American believers must, from now on, individually and through concerted action, strive to promote, in both their private and public lives, ideals which are the chief propelling forces that can most effectively accelerate the march of their institutions, plans, and enterprises, that can guard the honour and integrity of their Faith, and subdue any obstacles that may confront it in the future.

(“The Advent of Divine Justice”, p.

23

)

Adversity

If tribulation touch thee for My sake, call thou to mind My ills and troubles, and remember My banishment and imprisonment....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

143

, p.

313

)

But for the tribulations which are sustained in Thy path, how could Thy true lovers be recognized; and were it not for the trials which are borne for love of Thee, how could the station of such as yearn for Thee be revealed?...

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

95

)

O SON OF MY HANDMAID!

Be not troubled in poverty nor confident in riches, for poverty is followed by riches, and riches are followed by poverty. Yet to be poor in all save God is a wondrous gift, belittle not the value thereof, for in the end it will make thee rich in God...

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.

51

, p.

40

)

Attraction

Whoso ariseth among you to teach the Cause of his Lord, let him, before all else, teach his own self, that his speech may attract the hearts of them that hear him. Unless he teacheth his own self, the words of his mouth will not

influence the heart of the seeker....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
128
, p.
277
)

...the foundation of Bahá’u’lláh is love. ...you must have infinite love for each other, each preferring the other before himself. The people must be so attracted to you that they will exclaim, “What happiness exists among you!” and will see in your faces the lights of the Kingdom; then in wonderment they will turn to you and seek the cause of your happiness. You must give the message through action and deed, not alone by word. Word must be conjoined with deed. You must love your friend better than yourself; yes, be willing to sacrifice yourself.... I desire that you be ready to

sacrifice everything for each other, even life itself; then I will know that the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh has been established. I will pray for you that you may become the cause of upraising the lights of God. May everyone point to you and ask, “Why are these people so happy?” I want you to be happy in Green Acre, to laugh, smile and rejoice in order that others may be made happy by you....

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912”, p.
218
)

Capacity

...man must seek capacity and develop readiness. As long as he lacks susceptibility to divine influences, he is incapable of reflecting the light and assimilating its benefits. Sterile soil will produce nothing, even if the cloud of mercy pours rain upon it a thousand years. We must make the soil of our hearts receptive and fertile by tilling in order that the rain of divine mercy may refresh them and bring forth roses and hyacinths of heavenly planting.... As long as we lack susceptibility, the beauties and bounties of God cannot penetrate....

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912”, pp.
148
-49)

During thy supplications to God and thy reciting, “Thy Name is my healing”, consider how thine heart is cheered, thy soul delighted by the spirit of the love of God, and thy mind attracted to the Kingdom of God! By these attractions one’s ability and capacity increase. When the vessel is enlarged the water increases, and when the thirst grows the bounty of the cloud becomes agreeable to the taste of man. This is the mystery of supplication and the wisdom of

stating one's wants....

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in J. E. Esslemont, “Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era” (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1987), p.

93

)

Death

Death proffereth unto every confident believer the cup that is life indeed. It bestoweth joy, and is the bearer of gladness. It conferreth the gift of everlasting life.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

164

, p.

345

)

O SON OF MAN!

Thou art My dominion and My dominion perisheth not, wherefore fearest thou thy perishing? Thou art My light and My light shall never be extinguished, why dost thou dread extinction? Thou art My glory and My glory fadeth not; thou art My robe and My robe shall never be outworn. Abide then in thy love for Me, that thou mayest find Me in the realm of glory.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Arabic no.

14

, p.

7

)

Distinction

O army of God! Through the protection and help vouchsafed by the Blessed Bounty -- may my life be a sacrifice to His loved ones -- ye must conduct yourselves in such a manner that ye may stand out distinguished and brilliant as the sun among other souls. Should any one of you enter a city, he should become a centre of attraction by reason of his sincerity, his faithfulness and love, his honesty and fidelity, his truthfulness and loving-kindness towards all the peoples of the world, so that the people of that city may cry out and say: “This man is unquestionably a Bahá’í, for his manners, his behaviour, his conduct, his morals, his nature, and disposition reflect the attributes of the Bahá’ís.”

Not until ye attain this station can ye be said to have been faithful to the Covenant and Testament of God.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, pp.

25

-26)

I desire distinction for you. The Bahá'ís must be distinguished from others of humanity. But this distinction must not depend upon wealth -- that they should become more affluent than other people. I do not desire for you financial distinction. It is not an ordinary distinction I desire; not scientific, commercial, industrial distinction. For you I desire spiritual distinction -- that is, you must become eminent and distinguished in morals. In the love of God you must become distinguished from all else. You must become distinguished for loving humanity, for unity and accord, for love and justice. In brief, you must become distinguished in all the virtues of the human world -- for faithfulness and sincerity, for justice and fidelity, for firmness and steadfastness, for philanthropic deeds and service to the human world, for love toward every human being, for unity and accord with all people, for removing prejudices and promoting international peace. Finally, you must become distinguished for heavenly illumination and for acquiring the bestowals of God. I desire this distinction for you. This must be the point of distinction among you.

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912”, p. 190
)

Equality

In the estimation of God, all men are equal. There is no distinction or preference for any soul, in the realm of His justice and equity.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p. 37
)

God did not make these divisions, these divisions have had their origin in man himself. Therefore, as they are against the plan and purpose of God they are false and imaginary.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p. 37
)

This variety in forms and colouring which is manifest in all the kingdoms is according to creative Wisdom and hath a divine purpose.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p. 38
)

The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “The Advent of Divine Justice”, p. 38

)

Fear of God

...that which guardeth and restraineth man both outwardly and inwardly hath been and still is the fear of God....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.

93

)

The fear of God hath ever been the prime factor in the education of His creatures. Well is it with them that have attained thereunto!

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

27

)

Admonish men to fear God. By God! This fear is the chief commander of the army of Thy Lord. Its hosts are a praiseworthy character and goodly deeds. Through it have the cities of men’s hearts been opened throughout the ages and centuries, and the standards of ascendancy and triumph raised above all other standards.

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

136

)

He that seeketh to be a helper of God in this Day, let him close his eyes to whatever he may possess, and open them to the things of God.... He should cleanse his heart from all evil passions and corrupt desires, for the fear of God is the weapon that can render him victorious, the primary instrument whereby he can achieve his purpose. The fear of God is the shield that defendeth His Cause, the buckler that enableth His people to attain to victory. It is a standard that no man can abase, a force that no power can rival. By its aid, and by the leave of Him Who is the Lord of Hosts, they that have drawn nigh unto God have been able to subdue and conquer the citadels of the hearts of men.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

126

, p.

272

)

Guidance

Gird up the loins of thine endeavour, that haply thou mayest guide thy neighbour to the law of God, the Most Merciful. Such an act, verily, excelleth all other acts in the sight of God, the All-Possessing, the Most High....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

161

, p.
339
)

Let your acts be a guide unto all mankind, for the professions of most men, be they high or low, differ from their conduct. It is through your deeds that ye can distinguish yourselves from others. Through them the brightness of your light can be shed upon the whole earth....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
139

, p.
305
)

Happiness

The Cause of God hath come as a token of His grace. Happy are they who act; happy are they who understand; happy the man that hath clung unto the truth, detached from all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth.

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.
139
)

Man is, in reality, a spiritual being, and only when he lives in the spirit is he truly happy....

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912
“, p.
72
)

Holiness

O SON OF GLORY!

Be swift in the path of holiness, and enter the heaven of communion with Me. Cleanse thy heart with the burnish of the spirit, and hasten to the court of the Most High.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.
8

, p.
24
)

Image of God

The honour of man is through the attainment of the knowledge of God; his happiness is from the love of God; his joy is in the glad tidings of God; his greatness is dependent upon his servitude to God. The highest development of man is his entrance into the divine Kingdom, and the outcome of this human

existence is the nucleus and essence of eternal life. If man is bereft of the divine bestowals and if his enjoyment and happiness are restricted to his material inclinations, what distinction or difference is there between the animal and himself? In fact, the animal's happiness is greater, for its wants are fewer and its means of livelihood easier to acquire. Although it is necessary for man to strive for material needs and comforts, his real need is the acquisition of the bounties of God. If he is bereft of divine bounties, spiritual susceptibilities and heavenly glad tidings, the life of man in this world has not yielded any worthy fruit. While possessing physical life, he should lay hold of the life spiritual, and together with bodily comforts and happiness, he should enjoy divine pleasures and content. Then is man worthy of the title man; then will he be after the image and likeness of God, for the image of the Merciful consists of the attributes of the heavenly Kingdom. If no fruits of the Kingdom appear in the garden of his soul, man is not in the image and likeness of God, but if those fruits are forthcoming, he becomes the recipient of ideal bestowals and is enkindled with the fire of the love of God. If his morals become spiritual in character, his aspirations heavenly and his actions conformable to the will of God, man has attained the image and likeness of his Creator; otherwise, he is the image and likeness of Satan. Therefore, Christ hath said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

("The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912", pp.

335

-36)

Insight

O SON OF EARTH!

Wouldst thou have Me, seek none other than Me; and wouldst thou gaze upon My beauty, close thine eyes to the world and all that is therein; for My will and the will of another than Me, even as fire and water, cannot dwell together in one heart.

("The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh", Persian no.

31

, p.

33

)

Joy

Whoso keepeth the commandments of God shall attain everlasting felicity.

("Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", sec.

133

, p.

289

)

O SON OF MAN!

Sorrow not save that thou art far from Us. Rejoice not save that thou art drawing near and returning unto Us.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Arabic no.

35

, p.

12

)

O My servants! Sorrow not if, in these days and on this earthly plane, things contrary to your wishes have been ordained and manifested by God, for days of blissful joy, of heavenly delight, are assuredly in store for you....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

153

, p.

329

)

Rejoice, for the heavenly table is prepared for you.

Rejoice, for the angels of heaven are your assistants and helpers.

Rejoice, for the glance of the Blessed Beauty, Bahá’u’lláh, is directed upon you.

Rejoice, for Bahá’u’lláh is your Protector.

Rejoice, for the everlasting glory is destined for you.

Rejoice, for the eternal life is awaiting you.

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by Bahá’u’lláh during His

Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912”, p.

214

)

...all the sorrow and the grief that exist come from the world of matter -- the spiritual world bestows only the joy!

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,

p.

110

)

Knowledge

We have decreed, O people, that the highest and last end of all learning be the recognition of Him Who is the Object of all knowledge...

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

98

, p.
199
)

So great shall be the discernment of this seeker that he will discriminate between truth and falsehood, even as he doth distinguish the sun from shadow....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
125

, p.
268
)

Knowledge is love. Study, listen to exhortations, think, try to understand the wisdom and greatness of God. The soil must be fertilized before the seed can be sown.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “Star of the West”, vol. 20, no. 10 (January 1930), p.
314
)

Arts, crafts and sciences 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. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.
26
)

Respect ye the divines and learned amongst you, they whose conduct accords with their professions, who transgress not the bounds which God hath fixed, whose judgments are in conformity with His behests as revealed in His Book. Know ye that they are the lamps of guidance unto them that are in the heavens and on the earth. They who disregard and neglect the divines and learned that live amongst them -- these have truly changed the favour with which God hath favoured them.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
66

, p.
128
)

It is incumbent upon thee, in this day, to arise with celestial power and dissipate, with the aid of knowledge, the doubts of the peoples of the world, so that all men may be sanctified, and direct their steps towards the Most Great Ocean and cleave fast unto that which God hath purposed.

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.
111

)

Day and night you must strive that you may attain to the significances of the heavenly Kingdom, perceive the signs of Divinity, acquire certainty of knowledge and realize that this world has a Creator, a Vivifier, a Provider, an Architect -- knowing this through proofs and evidences and not through susceptibilities, nay, rather, through decisive arguments and real vision --that is to say, visualizing it as clearly as the outer eye beholds the sun. In this way may you behold the presence of God and attain to the knowledge of the holy, divine Manifestations.

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912”, p.

227

)

Life

Whosoever quickens one soul in this Cause is like unto one quickening all the servants...

(“Bahá’í World Faith: Selected Writings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1976), p.

206

)

O MY FRIEND!

Thou art the day-star of the heavens of My holiness, let not the defilement of the world eclipse thy splendour. Rend asunder the veil of heedlessness, that from behind the clouds thou mayest emerge resplendent and array all things with the apparel of life.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.

73

, p.

47

)

O friends! Be not careless of the virtues with which ye have been endowed, neither be neglectful of your high destiny.... Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding, the breeze that stirreth at the break of day, the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men, the letters inscribed upon His sacred scroll....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

96

, p.

196

)

Life in man should be like a flame, warming all with whom it comes into contact....

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p. 92
)

Love of God

For every one of you his paramount duty is to choose for himself that on which no other may infringe and none usurp from him. Such a thing -- and to this the Almighty is My witness -- is the love of God, could ye but perceive it.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec. 123
, p. 261
)

In the world of existence there is no more powerful magnet than the magnet of love....

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p. 79
)

...if the hearts of the people become devoid of the Divine Grace -- the Love of God -- they wander in the desert of ignorance, descend to the depths of ruin and fall to the abyss of despair where there is no refuge! They are like insects living in the lowest plane.

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 3, p. 526
)

Meditation

Through the faculty of meditation man attains to eternal life; through it he receives the breath of the Holy Spirit -- the bestowal of the Spirit is given in reflection and meditation.

...

The meditative faculty is akin to the mirror; if you put it before earthly objects it will reflect them. Therefore if the spirit of man is contemplating earthly subjects he will be informed of these.

But if you turn the mirror of your spirits heavenwards, the heavenly constellations and the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in your hearts, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be obtained.

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”, pp. 175

-76)

Nearness to God

The more pure and sanctified the heart of man becomes, the nearer it draws to God, and the light of the Sun of Reality is revealed within it. This light sets hearts aglow with the fire of the love of God, opens in them the doors of knowledge and unseals the divine mysteries so that spiritual discoveries are made possible. All the Prophets have drawn near to God through severance. We must emulate those Holy Souls and renounce our own wishes and desires. We must purify ourselves from the mire and soil of earthly contact until our hearts become as mirrors in clearness and the light of the most great guidance reveals itself in them.

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912”, p.

148

)

Praise

Thou canst best praise Him if thou lovest His loved ones, and dost safeguard and protect His servants from the mischief of the treacherous, that none may any longer oppress them....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

114

, p.

234

)

Fall prostrate on your faces before God, and celebrate His praise in the daytime and in the night season.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

15

, p.

38

)

Prayer

He, verily, loveth the one that turneth towards Him....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

134

, p.

291

)

Commune intimately with His Spirit, and be thou of the thankful....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

129

, p.
280
)

O SON OF BEING!

Bring thyself to account each day ere thou art summoned to a reckoning...

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Arabic no.

31

, p.
11
)

Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men. Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb. Though he may, at first, remain unaware of its effect, yet the virtue of the grace vouchsafed unto him must needs sooner or later exercise its influence upon his soul....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

136

, p.
295
)

While man prays he sees himself in the presence of God....

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “Star of the West”, vol. 20, no. 10 (January 1930), p.

316

)

...strive that your actions day by day may be beautiful prayers....

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,

p.
81

)

The act of supplication is the polish which erases all worldly desires. The delight of supplicating and entreating before God cuts one’s heart from the world....

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “Star of the West”, vol. 8, no. 4 (17 May 1917), p.

43

)

...supplicate unto Him and beseech in the middle of the night and at early morn just as a needy and captive one beseeches....

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 3, pp.

694

-95)

Man is eternally in a state of communion and prayer with the source of all good. The highest and most elevating state is the state of prayer. Prayer is communion with God.... The worshipper must pray with a detached spirit, unconditional surrender of the will, concentrated attention and a magnetic spiritual passion. His innermost being must be stirred with the ethereal breeze of holiness....

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in “Star of the West”, vol. 8, no. 4 (17 May 1917), p.

45

)

The greatest happiness for a lover is to converse with his beloved, and the greatest gift for a seeker is to become familiar with the object of his longing...

(“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, vol. 3, pp.

683

-84)

Radiance

Be ablaze as the fire, that ye may burn away the veils of heedlessness and set aglow, through the quickening energies of the love of God, the chilled and wayward heart....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

152

, pp.

322

-23)

The All-loving God created man to radiate the Divine light and to illumine the world by his words, action and life....

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,

p.

113

)

Believers ... must show their belief in their daily lives, so that the world might see the light shining in their faces. A bright and happy face cheers people on their way. If you are sad, and pass a child who is laughing, the child, seeing your sad face, will cease to laugh, not knowing why....

(“Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes of Conversations”, p.
124
)

With hearts set aglow by the fire of the love of God and spirits refreshed by the food of the heavenly spirit you must go forth as the disciples nineteen hundred years ago, quickening the hearts of men by the call of glad tidings, the light of God in your faces, severed from everything save God. Therefore, order your lives in accordance with the first principle of the divine teaching, which is love. Service to humanity is service to God. Let the love and light of the Kingdom radiate through you until all who look upon you shall be illumined by its reflection. Be as stars, brilliant and sparkling in the loftiness of their heavenly station. Do you appreciate the Day in which you live?

This is the century of the Blessed Perfection!

This is the cycle of the light of His beauty!

This is the consummate day of all the Prophets!

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912”, p.
8
)

Righteousness

Clothe thyself with the essence of righteousness, and let thine heart be afraid of none except God....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
153
, p.
323
)

Cleave unto righteousness, O people of Bahá! This, verily, is the commandment which this wronged One hath given unto you, and the first choice of His unrestrained Will for every one of you.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
43
, p.
94
)

One righteous act is endowed with a potency that can so elevate the dust as to cause it to pass beyond the heaven of heavens. It can tear every bond asunder, and hath the power to restore the force that hath spent itself and vanished....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
131

, p.
287

)

Spirituality

Thus, spirituality is the greatest of God's gifts, and "Life Everlasting" means "Turning to God"....

("Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912",

p.
112

)

...be controlled by the attraction of the Beauty of God, that His remembrance may run as the spirit in thy blood veins and limbs, and thus fill thee with the thoughts of the love of God.

("Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas", vol. 2, p.

314

)

Steadfastness

Supremely lofty will be thy station, if thou remainest steadfast in the Cause of thy Lord. Towards Him are thy busy movements directed, and in Him is thy final resting-place.

("Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", sec.

115

, p.
246

)

Nowhere doth your true and abiding glory reside except in your firm adherence unto the precepts of God, your whole-hearted observance of His laws, your resolution to see that they do not remain unenforced, and to pursue steadfastly the right course.

("Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", sec.

118

, p.
253

)

The essential thing is firmness and steadfastness....

("Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas", vol. 3, p.

696

)

Thankfulness

...the best way to thank God is to love one another.

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912”, p. 469)

...mere verbal thanksgiving is without effect. But real thankfulness is a cordial giving of thanks from the heart. When man in response to the favours of God manifests susceptibilities of conscience, the heart is happy, the spirit is exhilarated. These spiritual susceptibilities are ideal thanksgiving.

To express his gratitude for the favours of God man must show forth praiseworthy actions. In response to these bestowals he must render good deeds, be self-sacrificing, loving the servants of God, forfeiting even life for them, showing kindness to all the creatures. He must be severed from the world, attracted to the Kingdom of Abhá, the face radiant, the tongue eloquent, the ear attentive, striving day and night to attain the good pleasure of God. Whatsoever he wishes to do must be in harmony with the good pleasure of God. He must observe and see what is the will of God and act accordingly. There can be no doubt that such commendable deeds are thankfulness for the favours of God.

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912”, p. 236)

Unity

Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec. 72 , p. 140)

So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec. 132 , p. 288)

The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. one tree, and the leaves of one branch....
Ye are the fruits of

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec. 112 , p. 218

)

It is incumbent upon every man, in this Day, to hold fast unto whatsoever will promote the interests, and exalt the station, of all nations and just governments....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

43

, pp.

94

-95)

The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men....

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

110

, p.

215

)

It behoveth thee to consecrate thyself to the Will of God. Whatsoever hath been revealed in His Tablets is but a reflection of His Will. So complete must be thy consecration, that every trace of worldly desire will be washed from thine heart. This is the meaning of true unity.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

161

, p.

338

)

We desire but the good of the world and happiness of the nations... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled...

(Bahá’u’lláh, cited in “Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era”, pp.

39

-40)

Wisdom

Say: The sword of wisdom is hotter than summer heat, and sharper than blades of steel, if ye do but understand....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.

55

)

O ye loved ones of God! Drink your fill from the well-spring of wisdom, and soar ye in the atmosphere of wisdom, and speak forth with wisdom and

eloquence....

(“Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, p.
99
)

In this Day, We can neither approve the conduct of the fearful that seeketh to dissemble his faith, nor sanction the behaviour of the avowed believer that clamorously asserteth his allegiance to this Cause. Both should observe the dictates of wisdom, and strive diligently to serve the best interests of the Faith.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.
163
, p.
343
)

O SON OF DUST!

The wise are they that speak not unless they obtain a hearing, even as the cup-bearer, who proffereth not his cup till he findeth a seeker, and the lover who crieth not out from the depths of his heart until he gazeth upon the beauty of his beloved. Wherefore sow the seeds of wisdom and knowledge in the pure soil of the heart, and keep them hidden, till the hyacinths of divine wisdom spring from the heart and not from mire and clay.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.
36
, pp.
34
-35)

Work

O MY SERVANT!

The best of men are they that earn a livelihood by their calling and spend upon themselves and upon their kindred for the love of God, the Lord of all worlds.

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.
82
, p.
51
)

O MY SERVANTS!

Ye are the trees of My garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent on every one to engage in crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of wealth, O men of understanding!...

(“The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh”, Persian no.
80
, pp.
50
-51)

It is enjoined upon every one of you to engage in some form of occupation, such as crafts, trades and the like. We have graciously exalted your engagement in such work to the rank of worship unto God, the True One.... Waste not your time in idleness and sloth. Occupy yourselves with that which profiteth yourselves and others....

The most despised of men in the sight of God are those who sit idly and beg....

(“Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas”, p.
26
)

All humanity must obtain a livelihood by sweat of the brow and bodily exertion, at the same time seeking to lift the burden of others, striving to be the source of comfort to souls and facilitating the means of living. This in itself is devotion to God. Bahá’u’lláh has thereby encouraged action and stimulated service. But the energies of the heart must not be attached to these things; the soul must not be completely occupied with them. Though the mind is busy, the heart must be attracted toward the Kingdom of God in order that the virtues of humanity may be attained from every direction and source.

(“The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912 “, p.
187
)

Worship

A painter asked: “Is art a worthy vocation?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá turning to her impressively, said: “Art is worship.”

(“‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London: Addresses, and Notes on Conversations”, p.
93
)

...all effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship, if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity. This is worship: to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people....

(“Paris Talks: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912”,
pp.
176
-77)

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of

thy neighbour, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness

distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility.

(“Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, sec.

130

, p.

285

)

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