

Please bear in mind that "the Word of God is the King of words... it is an ocean inexhaustible in riches, comprehending all things. Everything which can be perceived is but an emanation therefrom".[2]

In Paris Talks,[3] Abdu'l-Bahá enunciated the following principles of the Bahá'í Faith:

Search after truth.

Unity of Mankind - all are servants of one God.

Religion must be the cause of love and affection.

Science and religion must agree.

Prejudice must be abolished.

Means of existence. Everyone must have the right to earn their daily bread and should have the means to earn a livelihood.

Abolish the extremes of wealth and poverty.

Equality of men before the law, justice for all, and the principle of reward and punishment.

Universal peace.

Non-interference of religion with politics.

Equality between men and women.

Power of the Holy Spirit - the energising factor in the life of man. Unless the Holy Spirit breathes into their souls, the great philosophers are powerless, their hearts dead.

Bahá'u'lláh instructs "every diligent and enterprising soul to exert his utmost endeavour and arise to rehabilitate the conditions in all regions and to quicken the dead with the living waters of wisdom and utterance by virtue of the love he cherisheth for God...".[4]

In the letters to individuals that are contained in Selections from the Writing of Abdu'l-Bahá, the Master informs us that in "this age of the progress of the world of humanity - we should be self-sacrificing and should serve the human race".[5] He tells us that the principles of the divine Manifestations are all-universal and all-inclusive. No one is left out. He reminds us to show love though deeds, not through the tongue. In a letter to the Executive Committee of the Central Organisation for a Durable Peace in the Hague in 1919, Abdu'l-Bahá, addressing

these

leaders as "O ye esteemed ones who are pioneers among the well-wishers of the world

of humanity!",[6] and explains in detail the various prejudices that need to be eliminated to attain world peace - the religious, racial, political, social, economic and

patriotic prejudices that are destroying the edifice of humanity. Thus the

Principle of

the Declaration of Universal Peace was announced - one nation, one teaching, one pathway,

one order, with prejudices all gone.

In His letter, He re-iterated the principles enunciated in Paris

Talks, with the addition of:

Children must be trained in morals - love, kindness, truthfulness, rectitude of conduct, good character, chastity, reverence and love of justice.

There should be one universal language in addition to one's mother tongue.

Voluntary sharing of one's property.

Freedom. Man is to be emancipated from the captivity of the world of nature.[7]

Religion is a might bulwark - it teaches morals.

Material civilisation must combine with Divine civilisation. Without the spirit, the world of mankind is lifeless and without this light the world of mankind is in utter darkness.

I would like to conclude this section with the principle of "He shall not be asked of His doings", as explained so clearly by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. This means that we accept whatever God decrees as lawful, and we do

not question or challenge the authority of God. "Whoso hath not recognised this sublime and fundamental verity... the winds of doubt will agitate him and the sayings of

the infidels will distract his soul. He that hath acknowledged this principle will be

endowed with the most perfect constancy."[8]

Now I shall give you a couple of case studies. Please confer with the person sitting next to you to see if you can identify the spiritual principle involved.

Case Study One:

A Tasmanian Aboriginal activist lady enrolls her 7 year old son at a country school halfway through term one. He is a good-looking dark-skinned boy, unruly in

his behaviour. After a few days at school, when all the children in the class are sitting

on the mat with the teacher sharing news, the boy suddenly becomes violent, without apparent provocation. He swings a chair at the young teacher, punches girls in the belly, bashes boys about the head, howling abuse all the time. The principal comes in to hold the boy, the mother is called on the telephone. She roars up to the school in her car, clasps her child to her bosom, screaming "Racist pigs" to all, "you're just like all the other f__ schools I've been to. You can't trust any of youse ___ ___ whitey bastards!" What is the principle everyone needs to observe here?

Case Study Two:

Your 11 year old boy, who until recently was an excellent student, suddenly is very reluctant to go to school, mumbles "nothing" when you ask him what is the matter, shrugs off any probing by you to determine the cause of his anti-school attitude. What principle would you call to mind?

Case Study Three:

You are a teacher on playground duty. You observe a group of 14 year old boys having a punch-up about 50 metres away from you. By the time you reach the scene some observers have scattered, and you hear conflicting stories from the loyal onlookers about what happened, who started it, etc. The rules say fighting in the school yard is forbidden, and the punishment is a spell in the "time-out" room for all. However this little scenario is taking place every time you are on duty. On the surface it appears that Damien (part-aboriginal) starts the punch-ups. Yet Damien's supporters deny this and blame Ralph - the son of the District Superintendent. They say that Ralph taunts Damien. Ralph denies this. What spiritual principle needs to be observed when sorting out this conflict?

References

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3. Paris Talks pages 135-167. Abdu'l-Bahá 1971. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, England

4. Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh page 172. op cit.

5. Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá page 68.

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6. Ibid. page 296; Ibid page 302

7. Kitáb-i-Aqdas page 77-78 (KA 162-463)

8. Bahá'u'lláh. Trans. Universal House of Justice, 1992.

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