

"A

grain of wheat, when cultivated by the farmer, will yield a whole harvest, and a seed, through the gardener's care, will grow into a great tree."

"Deprived

of cultivation, the mountain slopes would be jungles and forests without fruitful trees. The gardens bring forth fruits and flowers in proportion to the care and tillage bestowed upon them by the gardener."

Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, wrote in 1912:

"Would the

agricultural methods of the ancients suffice in the twentieth century?

Transportation in the former ages was restricted to conveyance by animals. How would it provide for human needs today? If modes of transportation had not been transformed, the teeming millions now upon the earth would die of starvation... How could great cities such as London and New York subsist if dependent upon ancient means of conveyance?"

The

methods of agriculture must progress, as with any other science, as knowledge increases, but the practices must still work in harmony with nature and the ecological systems:

"In all

matters moderation is desirable. If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil."

The

Basis of Good Health

Bahá'ís

believe that the immediate cause of illness is an imbalance in the component substances of the body, which allows disease to take hold. Healing is therefore possible by eating the correct foods in order to redress the balance. It also follows that the foods need to be pure, healthy and balanced in the first place so as not to introduce disease or allow it to develop. This means that methods of agriculture are of crucial importance. Bearing in mind the above quotation on

moderation, farmers departing too far from natural processes are likely to bring

unwanted side-effects. For example, the production of new strains of plants by genetic

modification or by selective breeding, whilst gaining some advantages in the short term, may lose other qualities or nutritious elements which are more important in the long run.

Some other

causes of concern might be the regular use of chemical fertilisers or pesticides, feeding of livestock on items which would not naturally form part of their diet, and the routine use of antibiotics for livestock.

Kindness
to Animals

Although Bahá'ís are not forbidden to eat meat, kindness to animals is given great stress:

"...it is not only their fellow human beings that the beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature."

This would preclude practices such as battery farming, veal crating and other intensive methods which cause distress to livestock.

In addition, the Bahá'í writings state that:

"The food of the future will be fruits and grains. The time will come when meat will no longer be eaten" our natural food is that which grows out of the ground. The people will gradually develop up to the condition of this natural food."

Therefore Bahá'ís expect that agriculture will gradually change to arable farming alone, using much less land than livestock farming to provide the same amount of nourishment.

Financial
Security

An underlying problem with the agricultural economy is the continual change in the fortunes of farmers, depending on market forces, weather and other factors. To help cope with this situation, the Bahá'í Writings specify a village fund, known as the storehouse. This is a model based on a village farming community but the principles can also be extended to towns and cities:

"To solve this problem we must begin with the farmer.... In every village there must be established a general storehouse which will have a number of revenues...."

Most of the revenues are based on the use of the land. One is a graduated tax on farmers

who are in profit, another is a percentage of profits from mining or extraction work. Those who do not work on the land will likewise pay a percentage of their surplus income. Local trustees will pay out from this storehouse to those in need, including farmers during the lean years.

In essence, this financial storehouse is very different from the present arrangements. It is a permanent and local system which emphasises the fundamental importance of a successful agricultural economy.

This system will also operate on a regional and national level. Any surplus from the local storehouse would be sent to a central fund, for use in less fortunate areas. Likewise the local area would receive help from this central fund if this became necessary.

The Future

"Strive as much as possible to become proficient in the science of agriculture."

Bahá'ís believe agriculture to be of the first importance. Its effects on the health of the population, on the environment and on the economics of an area are immeasurable. As with all human endeavour, it should be pursued with high ethical values, as a service to humanity. Farmers deserve respect, help and scientific guidance on the best way to produce healthy food or beneficial cash crops for market.

Bahá'ís foresee a future where the landscape will have changed as far fewer animals are farmed, the maintenance of a balanced, healthy environment is paramount, the economics of farming are mastered and the general population enjoys much better health.

The text of all these leaflets remains the copyright of Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop. The Bookshop is happy for people to download individual copies for their own purposes. Printed copies can be purchased from the Warwick Bookshop. Individuals or communities wishing to translate or print these leaflets in other countries please contact the Bookshop for permission.

METADATA

Views10260 views since posted 2010-07-07; last edit 2026-04-18 15:14 UTC;

previous at archive.org.../warwick_food_farming

Language

English

Permission

editor and publisher

Share

Shortlink: bahai-library.com/3795

Citation: ris/3795

select Collection:

Archives

Articles

Articles-unpublished

Audio

Bibliographies

BIC

Biographies

Books

Chronologies

Compilations

Compilations-NSA

Compilations-personal

Documents

East-asia

Encyclopedia

Essays

Etc

Excerpts

Fiction

Glossaries

Guardian

Histories

Introductory

Letters

Maps

Music

Newspapers

NSA-documents

NSA-letters

Personal

Pilgrims

Poetry

Presentations

Resources

Reviews

Scripts

Software

Statistics

Study

Talks

Theses

Transcripts

[Translations](#)
[UHJ-documents](#)
[UHJ-letters](#)
[Video](#)
[Visual](#)
[Writings](#)

[home](#)

[sitemap](#)

[series](#)

[chronology](#)

[search:](#)

[author](#)

[title](#)

[date](#)

[tags](#)

[adv. search](#)

[languages](#)

[inventory](#)

[bibliography](#)

[abbreviations](#)

[links](#)

[about](#)

[contact](#)

[RSS](#)

[new](#)