

support of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. You may find it helpful to read the article "The Human Rights Discourse: A Bahá'í Perspective", which was published in the 1996-97 edition of The Bahá'í World.

As requested, we are providing an enclosure with extracts on the subject of human rights from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi. ...

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

3. Enclosure (compilation)

From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

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
(Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p. 71) [1]

All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. The Almighty beareth Me witness: 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
(Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1983), p. 215) [2]

Illumine and hallow your hearts; let them not be profaned by the thorns of hate or the thistles of malice. Ye dwell in one world, and have been created through the operation of one Will. Blessed is he who mingleth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love. (

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh,
p. 334) [3]

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 neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

(
The Hidden Words
(Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1990), pp. 3-4) [4]

From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Although the body politic is one family yet because of lack of harmonious relations some members are comfortable and some in direst misery, some members are satisfied and some are hungry, some members are clothed in most costly garments and some families are in need of food and shelter. Why? Because this family lacks the necessary reciprocity and symmetry. This household is not well arranged. This household is not living under a perfect law. All the laws which are legislated do not ensure happiness. They do not provide comfort. Therefore a law must be given to this family by means of which all the members of this family will enjoy equal well-being and happiness....

First and foremost is the principle that to all the members of the body politic shall be given the greatest achievements of the world of humanity. Each one shall have the utmost welfare and well-being....

God is not partial and is no respecter of persons. He has made provision for all. The harvest comes forth for everyone. The rain showers upon everybody and the heat of the sun is destined to warm everyone. The verdure of the earth is for everyone. Therefore there should be for all humanity the utmost happiness, the utmost comfort, the utmost well-being. (

Foundations of World Unity

(Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1945), pp. 38-41) [5]

Bahá'u'lláh taught that an equal standard of human rights must be recognized and adopted. In the estimation of God all men are equal; there is no distinction or preferment for any soul in the dominion of His justice and equity. (

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

rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 182) [6]

From Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi

With reference to the absolute pacifists, or conscientious objectors to war: their attitude, judged from the Bahá'í standpoint, is quite antisocial, and due to its exaltation of the individual conscience leads inevitably to disorder and chaos in society. Extreme pacifists are thus very close to the anarchists, in the sense that both of these groups lay an undue emphasis on the rights and merits of the individual. The Bahá'í conception of social life is essentially based on the principle of the subordination of the individual will to that of society. It neither suppresses the individual nor does it exalt him to the point of making him an antisocial creature, a menace to society. As in everything, it follows the "golden mean". The only way that society can function is for the minority to follow the will of the majority. (21 November 1935 to an individual believer) [7]

But, of course, this extension of assistance to the poor, in whatever form, should under no circumstances be allowed to seriously interfere with the major collective interests of the Bahá'í community, as distinguished from the purely personal interests of its members. The demands of the Cause transcend those of the individual, and should therefore be given precedence. But these

two phases of Bahá'í social life, though not of equal importance, are by no means contradictory. Both of them are essential, and should be fostered, but each according to its own degree of importance. It is the responsibility of Bahá'í Assemblies to decide when individual interests should be subordinated to those affecting the collective welfare of the community. But, as already stated, the interests of the individual should always be safeguarded within certain limits, and provided they do not seriously affect the welfare of the group as a whole. (26 June 1936 to an individual believer) [8]

As regards your question about Bahá'í legislative bodies of the future: this is a matter which will have to be decided upon when the question arises, which of course may not be for some time. Of one thing we can be sure ? that the rights of non-Bahá'ís will always be very carefully safeguarded and cherished; far more so than the rights of minorities are under any present social system. (22 February 1956 to an individual believer) [9]

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