

Abdul Baha on Spirituality,

True Happiness and Progress

Ferocity and savagery are natural to animals, but men should show forth the qualities of love and affection. God sent all His prophets into the world with one aim, to sow in the hearts of men love and good will, and for this great purpose they were willing to suffer and to die. All the sacred books were written to lead and direct man into the ways of love and unity; and yet, in spite of all this, we have the sad spectacle of war and bloodshed in our midst.

When we look into the pages of history, past and present, we see the black earth reddened by human blood. Men kill each other like the savage wolves and forget the laws of love and tolerance.

Now this luminous age has come, bringing with it wonderful civilization and material progress. Men's intellects have widened, their perceptions grown, but, alas! in spite of all this fresh blood is being split day by day. Look at the present European war, consider for a moment the fate of these unhappy people. How many have been killed during this sad time. How many homes are ruined, wives desolate and children orphans. And what is to be gained in exchange for all this anguish and heart-ache? Only a corner of the earth.

War Grows Worse.

This all shows that material progress alone does not tend to uplift man. On the contrary, the more he becomes immersed in material progress the more does his spirituality become obscured.

In times gone by progress on the material plane was not so rapid, neither was there bloodshed in such profusion. In ancient warfare there were no cannon, no guns, no dynamite, no shells, no torpedoboats, no battleships, no submarines. Now, owing to material civilization, we have all these inventions, and war goes on from bad to worse.

I want to make you understand that material progress and spiritual progress are two very different things, and that only if material progress goes hand in hand with spirituality, can any real progress come about, and the most great peace reign in the world. If men followed the holy counsels and the teachings of the prophets, if divine light shone in all hearts, and men were really religious, we should soon see peace on earth, and the kingdom of God among men. The laws of God may be likened unto the soul, and material progress unto the body. If the body were not animated by the soul, it would cease to exist. It is my earnest prayer that spirituality may ever grow and increase in the world, so that customs may become enlightened, and peace and concord may be established.

Must Reap as We Sow.

War and rapine, with their attendant cruelties, are an abomination to God, and bring their own punishment, for the God of love is also a God of justice, and each man must inevitably reap what he sows. Let us try to understand the commands of the Most High, and to order our lives as He directs. True happiness depends on spiritual food, and in having the heart ever open to receive the divine bounty.

If the heart turns away from the blessings God offers, how can it hope for happiness? If it does not put its hope and trust in God's mercy, where can it find rest? Oh, trust in God! For His bounty is everlasting, and in His blessings, for they are superb. Oh, put your faith in the Almighty, for He faileth not, and His goodness endureth forever! His sun giveth light continually, and the clouds of His mercy are full of the waters of compassion with which He waters the hearts of all who trust in Him. His refreshing breeze ever carries healing in its wings to the parched souls of men! Is it wise to turn away from such a loving Father, who showers His blessings upon us, and to choose, rather, to be slaves of matter?

Radiance From Persia.

God in His infinite goodness has exalted us to so much honor, and has made us masters over the material world. Shall we then become her slaves? Nay, rather let us claim our birthright, and strive to live the life of the spiritual sons of God. The glorious sun of truth has once again risen in the East. From the far horizon of Persia its radiance is spreading far and wide, dispersing the dense clouds of superstition. The light of the unity of mankind is beginning to illumine the world, and soon the banner of divine harmony and the solidarity of nations will be flying high in the heavens. Yea, the breezes of the Holy Spirit will inspire the whole world!

Oh, peoples and nations! Arise and work, and be happy! And gather together under the tent of the unity of mankind!