

Newly translated portions of Bahai texts, Baha'i Sacred Scriptures

July 2025¹

Bahá'u'lláh

3. The Coming of Bahá'u'lláh : The Divine Physician

14.1 The Supreme Pen hath, in ringing tones, enjoined love and fellowship on the whole world and hath categorically forbidden everyone to engage in that which is the cause of division, discord, estrangement, and the like, so that His grace and bounty, His favour and generosity may be made manifest....

14.2 God grant that thou mayest attain unto His loving providence and mayest turn to and speak of that which refineth the character of His servants. O physician! The people are heedless and in need of a Teacher and Educator. They must, through the care and loving-kindness of the divine Physicians and the learned ones of the age, recognize the cause of their illnesses and seek to find their cure. Strive then, that haply the heedless may perceive the fruit of goodly deeds and a praiseworthy character. Should they attain unto this station, each one would find himself capable of reforming, edifying, and uniting the negligent and the wayward. The Pen of this Wronged One hath at all times directed everyone to show forth love, compassion, and concord, and hath explicitly set forth the meaning of “rendering the Cause victorious”, which hath been mentioned in the holy Tablets. And yet, it is observed that some have considered sedition to be the means of the betterment of the world and of gaining victory. Nay, by the One Who hath created the world through a single word of His mouth! The Cause of God is rendered victorious through wisdom and utterance, which are in turn conditional upon the utmost joy and radiance. We beseech God to confirm all in achieving that which is worthy of this Day.

14.3 Say: O people! Ye have stepped out of nothingness into the realm of being that ye may reconstruct the world. Dissension and strife ill beseem the station of a human being. In this day, should a soul become the cause of sorrow to another soul, no matter from which Faith, this would not be pleasing to this Wronged One. Unto this bear witness both Mine inner and outer tongue, and beyond them every wise and discerning, every learned and attentive soul. The fundamental purpose of religion as brought down from the heaven of divine Revelation is harmony and union among all people. O physician! Now consider how this pure and gem-like reality hath been clouded by the dust of vain imaginings and how, through the tyranny of the ignorant, things have come to such a pass that religion hath become the cause of hatred amongst God's servants. This is the pure

¹ The newly translated sections from the compilation https://bahai-library.com/bahauallah_abdul-baha_sacred_writings . Section and paragraph numbering as in the compilation.

stream of utterance flowing down from the Kingdom of divine knowledge. Blessed is the soul who approacheth it and drinketh therefrom in the name of the one true God. It is hoped that the people of Bahá may attain unto that which God hath purposed and become the dawning-places of harmony and fellowship, that perchance, through the grace of God and the outpourings of His bounty, they may become the cause of the rehabilitation of the world and its reconstruction.

14.4 Convey to the friends in that land the greetings of this Exile and say: God grant that ye may be occupied in making mention of God with the utmost wisdom, so that your words may stir the hearts. We counsel you to observe compassion, mercifulness, forbearance, trustworthiness, and sincerity, that haply this darksome world may be illumined with the light of a praiseworthy character and goodly deeds. This is the true meaning of “rendering the Cause victorious” which hath been revealed in the Book. In this day, should any soul commit an act that is the cause of affliction or harm to another, that deed would in truth revert unto this Wronged One. Beware, O My loved ones, lest ye commit that which human minds abhor. Thus doth My Pen counsel you and My truth-speaking and trustworthy tongue exhort you.

5. Responding to the Call of Bahá’u’lláh: Cultivating Spiritual Capacities

12.1 Peruse ye every day the verses revealed by God. Blessed is the man who reciteth them and reflecteth upon them. He truly is of them with whom it shall be well.

15.1 Peruse My verses with joy and radiance. Verily they will attract you unto God and will enable you to detach yourselves from aught else save Him. Thus have ye been admonished in God’s Holy Writ and in this resplendent Tablet.

5. Responding to the Call of Bahá’u’lláh: Raising Divine Institutions

45.1 Addressing the nations, the Ancient Beauty ordaineth that in every city in the world a house be raised in the name of justice wherein shall gather pure and steadfast souls to the number of the Most Great Name. These souls, as they come together, should regard themselves as entering into the presence of God, inasmuch as this binding command hath flowed from the Pen of Him Who is the Ancient of Days, and the glances of God are directed towards that assembly.

45.2 Once in session, it behoveth them to converse, on behalf of God’s servants, upon the affairs and interests of all. They should, for instance, accord precedence to the teaching of the Cause, inasmuch as it is a matter of supreme importance, so that all people, even as a single soul, may enter within the Tabernacle of divine Unity, and all humanity may become even as a single body. In like manner, they should consider such matters as the refinement of manners, the preservation of human dignity, the development of cities, and the polity which God hath made a bulwark for His lands and a fortress for His people.

45.3 The teaching of the Cause of God should be considered with a view to what, in the particular conditions of each time and age, is most conducive to its advancement and, similarly, other matters; whatever is then decided upon should be carried into effect. Care, however, should be taken lest aught be implemented contrary to that which hath been sent down in the divine verses in this Revelation of imperishable glory. For whatsoever the one true God—exalted be His glory!—hath prescribed unto His servants, the same is to their best advantage. He, verily, is kinder to you than ye are to yourselves; He, verily, is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

45.4 Should these souls comply with the prescribed conditions, they shall assuredly be aided through His invisible bestowals. This, truly, is an undertaking whose benefit embraceth all. Many matters, if not attended to, will result in waste and dissipation. How many orphans there are in the world who will be left to lead fruitless lives if attention is not paid to their education and training; and a soul that yieldeth no fruit were better dead than living. Consideration likewise should be given to rich and noble people who through infirmity, age, or some other cause, have become afflicted by poverty and abasement. Upon all these and other matters connected to the world's affairs, these souls must, wholly for the sake of God, ponder and deliberate, and take whatever action is correct.

45.5 Were men to gaze with the eye of the heart, they would know for a surety that whatsoever hath descended from the Source of Command containeth naught but pure benefit for all the peoples of the world. All must become as wings to bear one another onward. Man's true honour lieth in wisdom, understanding and an upright character, not in amassing earthly ornaments, in vainglory and conceit. All were created out of dust, and unto dust shall they return. O people of Bahá! Man's true adornment consisteth not in the trappings of this world, but rather in recognition of the one true God—magnified be His might!—and in sciences, crafts and upright conduct.

45.6 Ye are the pearls of the Sea of Oneness! Consider ye the pearl: Its purity and fineness are qualities inherent in itself. Were one to wrap it in the finest silks, they would but hide from view its delicacy and lustre. Its beauty is within itself. Strive, then, to acquire this beauty, and grieve not at lacking this world's material benefits.

45.7 O ye trees of the celestial paradise! Deprive not yourselves of the vernal breezes of God's loving-kindness, nor withhold from yourselves the sweet savours of His holy words of wisdom. Such is the measure of His gracious providence that, notwithstanding the heedlessness of all and this most great affliction in the Prison of 'Akká, He hath yet caused to flow from the Pen of the All-Glorious that which profiteth His creatures. He, verily, is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

9. The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh: The Universal House of Justice

9.1 It behoveth the loved ones of God to occupy themselves under all circumstances with that which is conducive to the edification of human souls, the advancement of the world of being, and the exaltation of the Word of God, the realization of which dependeth upon the deliberations of the trustees of the House of Justice. Well is

it with them that strive to render service to the world of humanity. The influence of these souls will lead the world from hardship to comfort, from poverty to wealth, and from abasement to glory. We beseech God to graciously aid them to observe piety and righteousness, and to open before their faces the portals of grace and mercy, of blessings and wealth. Potent is He to do what He pleaseth, and in His grasp are held the reins of all created things. He doeth and He ordaineth. He is the Supreme Ruler, the Ancient of Days, the Ordainer, the Omniscient.

Abdu'l-Baha

10. The Manifestations of God: True Religion

9.1 To the wise ones of the world who are lovers of the truth it is clear and evident that the purpose of the appearance of the holy and divine Manifestations, the revelation of Books, and the establishment of the religion of God is to foster fellowship and love amongst the members of the human race. Religion is the foundation of spiritual unity, the unity of thought, the unity of perception, the unity of custom. It is the spiritual tie that bindeth all people together so that minds and souls, through divine education, may grow and develop, seek out the truth, and attain unto the highest degrees of human perfection, and that divine civilization may thereby be established. For in the world of being there are two kinds of civilization. One is material civilization, which serveth the world of bodies, and the other is divine civilization, which serveth the world of morality. The founders of material civilization are the wise ones of the world, while the founders of divine civilization are the holy Manifestations of God. Religion is the foundation of divine civilization. Material civilization is like the body, and divine civilization is like the spirit. The body, without spirit, is dead, even should it possess the utmost grace and beauty.

9.2 In short, by religion is meant the necessary relationships for the oneness of the world of humanity. This is the foundation of the religion of God! This is eternal grace! This is the teachings and laws of God! This is the light of everlasting life! Alas, a thousand times alas, that this firm foundation hath been abandoned and obscured by the followers of all religions, while they have fabricated imitations that bear no relationship to the foundation of the Faith of God. And as these imitations all differ from one another, the differences lead to dissension, and dissension endeth in war. The blood of the hapless ones is spilled upon the ground, their possessions are looted and pillaged, and their children are orphaned and made captive.

9.3 Thus, religion, which should be the source of harmony, bringeth about estrangement. Religion, which should be as pure honey, hath become a deadly poison. Religion, which should be the source of the illumination of the human world, hath become the cause of its darkness. Religion, which is the source of eternal life, hath become the instrument of death. Thus, as long as these imitations persist and these snares of hypocrisy remain, religion will bring naught to humanity save detriment and loss. Therefore

must one entirely discard these outworn and mouldering imitations that are practised by the religions and seek out the fundamentals of the religion of God. Because the foundation of all the divine religions is one and is the truth—and truth doth not admit multiplicity and division—therefore will absolute unity and fellowship amongst all religions be attained, and the religion of God will be unveiled in all its beauty and perfection before the assemblage of the world.

10.14.1 It is clear and evident that the innate nature and reality of all things is capable of manifesting two kinds of perfections. One is innate perfections, which require no intermediary and are purely the creation of God. The other is acquired perfections, which are attained through the training of a true educator.

14.2 Consider the outward realities: The trees, flowers, and fruits manifest, on the one hand, an innate grace and vitality which is purely a divine bestowal, and, on the other, an ineffable sweetness and beauty which proceedeth from the tender care of the gardener. For left to themselves they would become an untamed thicket; fail to bear their abundance of blossoms, flowers, and fruits; and be fit only for the fire. Once they are brought under the tender care and attention of the cultivator, however, they are transformed into gardens, bowers, and orchards; bring forth flowers and fruits; and adorn the face of the earth with blossoms and sweet herbs.

14.3 The same holdeth true of human society: Were people to be left to their own devices they would become even as the creeping things of the earth and be numbered with the beasts of the field. They would learn the ways of ferocity, cruelty, and bloodthirstiness, and be consumed with the fire of remoteness and rebellion.

14.4 All humanity are pupils in the school of the world and are afflicted and enfeebled by chronic ills. Those sanctified Beings, the Messengers and Chosen Ones of God, are the Instructors of the assemblage of the All-Merciful and the Physicians of the dispensary of the All-Glorious. They are the Heralds of His providence and the Luminaries of the firmament of His guidance. They appear so that the flame of inward and outward perfections that lieth dormant within the lamp of the human reality may be ignited through that fire which the hand of God hath kindled, and that the chronic ills that afflict humankind may be eradicated through the bounty of the divine grace and the bestowals of a Christ-like Spirit.

14.5 It followeth from this clear argument that human society requireth the care and training of a true Educator and that human souls stand in need of a power that can regulate, bind, restrain, deter, encourage, impel, and attract them. For unless the garden of creation be tended by a loving gardener, sustained by the manifold grace of the one true God, and administered by the just policies of the government, it will never acquire vitality and grace, nor will it prosper and flourish.

14.6 This power to deter and restrain, to govern and regulate, to lead and impel is of two kinds. The first agency of protection and deterrence is political power, which pertaineth to the physical world. It ensureth the material well-being of humanity;

preserveth the life, property, and honour of all; and is the source of the greatness and virtue of this noble race. The centre of the operation of this political power and the pivot of the circle of this divine bounty are the just sovereigns, faithful trustees, wise ministers, and courageous commanders.

14.7 The other educator and regulator of the world of humanity is the sanctified power of the spirit, the divinely revealed Scriptures, the Prophets of God, the heavenly souls, and the divinely learned. For these repositories of God's revelation and daysprings of His inspiration educate the hearts and souls of humanity, rectify their characters, refine their conduct, and inspire the righteous among them. That is, these sanctified beings, even as a force born of the spirit, deliver the souls of men from the evils of a corrupt character, the darkness of reprehensible attributes, and the defilement of the realm of existence, and thus illumine them with the light of human virtues, divine attributes, and heavenly characteristics and qualities, so that the shining truth of the words "Hallowed be the Lord, the most excellent of all creators" and the full glory of the utterance "We created man in the most excellent of forms" may be realized within the sacred reality of man. It is through the liberal effusions of the grace of these daysprings of the signs and verses of God that pure and subtle human realities become the focal centre of the blessings of the All-Merciful.

11. The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh: The Mission of Bahá'u'lláh

7.1 Some fifty to sixty years ago, when the fire of war was raging amongst governments and nations and bloodshed was considered the greatest of human attainments, the blood of thousands of human souls coloured the earth each day. Children were left without fathers, fathers without their sons, and mothers moaned and wailed, with tearful eyes and burning hearts, at the loss of their children. The darkness of hatred and animosity had enveloped humanity, the heavenly light had completely disappeared, and the breathings of the Holy Spirit were withheld.

7.2 At that time, Bahá'u'lláh, like a brilliant star shining with the light of the oneness of humanity, appeared above the horizon of Persia and bestowed spiritual grace upon all. He cast the rays of the light of guidance upon the whole earth, kindled the candle of love, and caused the beauty of truth to be made manifest. He broke the chains of religious prejudice, racial bigotry, patriotic fanaticism, and political animosity, and compared the world of humanity to a tree and all peoples to its branches, leaves, blossoms, and fruits. He destroyed the foundation of ignorant prejudice and raised up the edifice of universal love. He established the oneness of humankind and promoted equality amongst all people. He proclaimed that the mercy of God encompasseth all and divine blessings pour down upon everyone. The gates of the Kingdom were opened wide, and the lights of the Realm on high became manifest. Throughout His entire life, Bahá'u'lláh was in a state of extreme hardship and torment. In Persia, He was imprisoned and bound in chains, was under constant threat of the sword, and was made to suffer grievous blows. He was then banished from Persia to Baghdad and lived as an exile in that land. He later became

captive in the Prison of 'Akká and, while confined and in chains, promulgated His Cause and raised the banner of the oneness of humankind.

7.3 Now, praised be God, the light of love hath spread in both East and West, and the tabernacle of fellowship amongst hearts and souls is raised in the midmost heart of the world. The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh have been spread in the East and the West, the fame of the Kingdom hath encompassed the earth, and the tidings of the world's Great Peace have created tumult in the realm of the hearts. It is hoped that through the endeavours of pure souls, the darkness of enmity and dissension may entirely vanish and the light of love and harmony may shine; that the world may become another world and this nether realm may mirror forth the Kingdom of God; that the people of the world may embrace one another, the terrestrial globe may become one homeland, and the different races may be considered as one race; that this conflict and contention may end and the heart-ravishing love of God may become manifest in the assemblage of the world.

12. The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh: The Elimination of Prejudices

13.1 O ye friends of God! These religious, political, patriotic, and racial prejudices are destructive of the world of humanity. Justice is desirable and praiseworthy whether it emanateth from compatriots or from strangers. A well-wishing stranger is better than a heedless friend. The world of humanity must be entirely freed from the idle fancy of prejudices. The whole earth is one homeland, all humanity is one people, and all are descendants of Adam. Religion is independent of politics. Religion promoteth praiseworthy qualities. The people of religion must strive for it to become a cause of fellowship amongst races; otherwise no benefit will result from it. Divine religions are the cause of fellowship, so that national prejudices may be abolished, and all peoples may become kind to one another and entirely severed from racial prejudice. Justice is praiseworthy though it come from a stranger, and tyranny is blameworthy though it be from one's own brother. This is the truth, and all besides it is vain imaginings. A just stranger is a brother, and a tyrannical brother is a stranger.

13.2. I beseech God that ye may be promoters of the oneness of the world of humanity and well-wishers of all peoples, that ye may strive so that the pavilion of universal peace may be pitched in the midmost heart of the world and the standard of the oneness of humankind may be unfurled in the East and the West. This is the cause of the good-pleasure of God. This is the basis of religion. This is the policy of the Holy Books. This is the cause of the felicity of the world of humanity.

13.3 The time hath passed when humankind could achieve happiness through conflict amongst races and nations. This is now the century of light and the era of the Divine Spirit. The inner realities stand revealed, and it is clear and evident that superstitious prejudices have ever been the cause of desolation upon the earth. Happiness is unattainable except through fellowship, unity, and the oneness of the world of humanity.

12. The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh: The Independent Investigation of Truth

15.1 The investigation of truth will assuredly remove all imitations. When blind imitations are eliminated, the oneness of humankind will be revealed, and it will become evident that true religion is the cause of fellowship and unity amongst the people, not the cause of estrangement and rapacity. Through the power of true religion, ignorant prejudices—such as blind religious prejudice, national prejudice, territorial prejudice, and political prejudice—will be dispelled. These idle fancies will disappear and the light of truth will be revealed. Science and religion will hold each other in close embrace.

12. The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh: The Harmony of Science and Religion

16.1 All people are captives of blind imitation and follow the dogmas of their forefathers. But Bahá'u'lláh hath said that imitation is not allowed; one must investigate the truth. Bahá'u'lláh hath moreover said that science and religion are conjoined and cannot be separated. A religion that doth not acknowledge reason, the sciences, and the arts is merely the blind imitation of one's forebears and is naught but idle fancy. For science consisteth of the truth, and religion must therefore conform to science. If it doth not conform thereto, then it is idle fancy and is false.

17.1 Among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that religion and faith must be in conformity with science and precious reason, for if religion be contrary to science it is blind imitation, and a wise and intelligent person will not acknowledge it or submit to it.

14. The Life of the Spirit: Spiritual Enkindlement

6 1 O thou who art as a lamp set aflame with the fire of the love of God! I read thy recent letter, which told of thy fervent love and of thine enkindlement with the fire of the love of thy Lord, the Mighty, the Praised, and indicated the pervading influence of the Spirit of Truth within thy limbs and nerves, thy veins and arteries, thy bones and blood and flesh, in such wise that it hath taken the reins of power from thy hands, moving thee as it willeth, causing thee to speak as it willeth, and attracting thee as it willeth. This indeed well becometh every heart that is filled with the spirit of the love of God. Soon shalt thou behold wondrous results and discover the signs of thy Mighty Lord.

8.1 However, I hope that this meeting was like unto the lamp's wick that met the fire and was ignited upon contact. I am expectantly awaiting the results of this meeting, that I may find thee ablaze like a candle and consumed like a moth by the fire of the love of God. May thou, moved by the intensity of love and rapture, weep like the cloud, laugh like the fresh meadow, and tremble with joy like the incomparable sapling stirred by the breezes of the Abhá Paradise.

14.9.1 O thou seeker after the Kingdom of God! If thou wishest thy speech and utterance to penetrate hearts that are hardened, rid thyself of all attachment to the world and turn thy face unto the Kingdom of God. Kindle the fire of His love within thy heart in such wise that thou mayest become a burning flame and a luminous candle of guidance. Then will thy speech, through the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, stir every heart.

14. The Life of the Spirit: Faith and Deeds

19.1 Pleasing and acceptable as is a person of righteous actions before God's Holy Threshold, yet deeds should proceed from knowledge. However matchless and exquisite may be a blind man's handiwork, yet he himself is deprived of seeing it. How sorely do certain animals labour on man's behalf, what loads they bear for him, how greatly they contribute to his ease and comfort; and yet, because they are unaware, they enjoy no recompense for all their pains. The clouds rain down their bounty, nurturing the plants and flowers, and imparting verdure and enchantment to the plain and prairie, the forest and the garden; but yet, unconscious as they are of the results and fruit of their outpourings, they win no praise or honour, nor earn the gratitude and approbation of any man. The lamp imparteth light, but as it hath no consciousness of doing so, no one is indebted to it. This apart, a man of righteous deeds and goodly conduct will assuredly turn towards the Light, in whichever quarter he beholdeth it. The point is this, that faith compriseth both knowledge and the performance of good works.

14. The Life of the Spirit: Striving for Spiritual Perfections

21.1 The friends and handmaids of the Merciful must render service to the oneness of the human world and show love and fellowship towards all people. They must deal with all kindreds, religions, and creeds with the utmost sincerity, goodwill, love, and kindness. They must consider how the tree of their existence may bring forth good fruit, and no fruit is greater than love and fellowship with all humanity. Bahá'u'lláh, addressing the world of humanity, saith: "Ye are all the leaves of one tree and the fruits of one branch." Such being the case, the existence of bonds of kinship, brotherhood, sonhood, and fatherhood amongst all human beings is proven and established. Strive ye, then, with heart and soul to conduct yourselves in accordance with these teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Be a shelter and refuge to every oppressed one, and a helper and supporter to every vanquished one. Be a skilled physician to every sick one, and a healing balm to every wounded one. Offer a safe haven to every fearful one, and bring comfort and solace to every dismayed one. Gladden the heart of every sorrowful one, and bring joy to every tearful one. Be as refreshing water to every thirsty one, and as heavenly food to every hungry one. Become the cause of glory to every abased one, and the source of blessings to every poor one.

21.2 Beware, beware, lest ye offend any heart. Beware, beware, lest ye hurt any soul. Beware, beware, lest ye deal unkindly towards any person. Beware, beware, lest ye bring despair to any human being. Should a soul become the cause of grief to any heart or

despondency to any soul, it would be better for him to abide in the depths of the earth than to move and walk upon its surface. Should a person consent to the abasement of his own kind, it is indeed better that he should perish, for his non-existence is preferable to his existence and his death better than his life.

21.3 Therefore, I counsel you to strive, as much as ye can, for the welfare of all people, and to show, with the utmost sincerity, love and fellowship to all the members of the human race. Remove from your midst all racial, patriotic, religious, sectarian, political, commercial, industrial, and agricultural prejudices, so that ye may be freed from all things and may lay the foundations of the oneness of the world of humanity. All countries are but one country, and all nations are the children of one father, Adam. The struggle for existence amongst the ferocious wolves is the cause of all this strife, whereas the expanse of the earth is spacious and the banquet tablet of the Lord is outspread in all regions.

22.1 Therefore, O ye servants of God and handmaids of the Merciful, rest ye not for a moment, seek no repose, and ask not for ease and comfort! Day and night, strive ye with heart and soul to spread the sweet savours of Paradise, to raise the melody of the Abhá Kingdom, to join together in intimate communion, to be graciously aided with the confirmations of the Holy Spirit, to clothe the temple of existence with a new attire, to bestow eternal life upon the reality of souls, to be the cause of the progress of the human world, to become the source of awareness and good character for bloodthirsty creatures, to bring peace and tranquillity to the world, and to adorn humanity with the bounties of the All-Merciful. Perchance ignorance, enmity, and estrangement may be removed entirely from amongst the people and the banner of tranquillity, freedom, wisdom, and unity be unfurled, for the chain of existence hath countless links that are connected with each other. This connection is the cause of the appearance of spiritual powers in the visible world.

22.2 O ye true friends! Make ye a mighty effort, that this world may become another world, and this darksome earth may become shining and resplendent through the rays of the Sun of Truth. I beseech God that this bounty may be realized and this eternal grace revealed, and that the friends of God may attain unto every blessing.

15 The Bahá'í Life: The Nature and Disposition of the People of Bahá

1.1 O ye true friends of the Most Great Name and spiritual companions of the Ancient Beauty! Praise be to God that ye came into the world in this century of light and age of mysteries. Ye entered beneath His sheltering shadow, apprehended the secret of existence, and were guided by His glorious light. How beloved were ye, for ye attained unto knowledge and discernment. How many erudite scholars were deprived, while ye were made the intimates of His mysteries; and how many who claimed true understanding were

lost and wandered astray in the desert of remoteness, while ye found your way to the sanctuary of the Day-Star of the world. What bestowal is this, what favour and guidance!

1.2 Render thanks for these bounties, and arise to fulfil the counsels and admonitions of the Incomparable Lord of the world. Observe that which hath been set forth in the Books and Tablets, and show forth the nature and disposition of the people of Bahá. Be wholly free from every joy but the glad-tidings of God, and stay clear of all ease and comfort save that which is found beneath the shelter of the Lord. Be even as fruitful trees and as stars of the most luminous horizon. Become the servants of the one true God and His selfless lovers in both the East and the West. Be Bahá'ís in character and disposition, and be heavenly in heart and soul. Look upon enemies as friends, and see ill-wishers as well-wishers. Account the faithless as loyal friends, consider the ignorant as the wise, and deem savage foes as intimate companions. That is to say, treat the sinner, the ill-wisher, and the bloodthirsty enemy as ye would the loyal friend and close confidant.

1.3 My meaning is this: Be the source of pure goodness and utter bounty; look not upon the worthiness or merit of the people. In every age and cycle, love and forbearance have been enjoined, but a pretext was always advanced, and that was the question of worthiness or unworthiness, that this person was malicious and scheming or that one bloodthirsty and hateful. And even if forgiveness was shown, reproach and censure went hand in hand with pardon and forgiveness. In this Dispensation, however, all such matters are abrogated, and heartfelt love and kindness towards all peoples have been expressly set forth in the Book.

2.1 The radiance of the Ever-Loving Lord was shed upon the East and the West from Persia. The world of dust was freed from all that is oppressive and dark and became luminous and bright. The light of truth shone upon the realm of illusion, making the contingent world the mirror of the Placeless and adorning the nether plane with the images of the Concourse on high. Strive, as far as ye are able, to purify your hearts, purge your breasts, sanctify your eyes, and attune your ears, so that this light may shine in the utmost radiance upon the tablets of hearts and souls. The treasures of heaven have been laid bare through the aid and bounty of the Abhá Beauty, and limitless effusions of grace have been vouchsafed. Great and glorious bestowals have encompassed the world, and the bounty and favour of the Ancient of Days has been perfected. The more we supplicate and pray, the greater will be the flow of His grace, and the more effort we make, the more will the hearts be opened and the greater will be the confirmations of the Abhá Kingdom.

2.2 I swear by the Most Great Name, may my soul be offered up for His loved ones, that such great bounty hath been made manifest in the assemblage of the world that its beauty and charm have filled the whole earth with splendour. This soul-stirring bounty belongeth to the one who in this day striveth with heart and soul to teach the Cause, who hath no wish by day or night but to diffuse the Divine fragrances, and who cherisheth no hope save to exalt the Word of God. All things confirm and assist such a soul, and the world and all that is therein render service unto him. Consider former times when every soul who arose to teach the Cause of God perfumed the world with the breaths of holiness

in the kingdoms of earth and heaven, in such wise that the sweet scent of those breaths can still be inhaled by the pure in heart. Those souls who did not arise to perform this praiseworthy deed passed by without sowing any seed and in the end surrendered their lives while still longing for that bounty.

2.3 O loved ones of God! The candle must glow bright, and the rose must diffuse sweet fragrances. This indeed is the truth! It is my hope that, by the grace of the Ancient Beauty, the beloved of God may consort with all people with heavenly attributes, and that the lights of purity and sanctity, of lowliness and humility, of detachment and rapture may shine forth from their faces. May they associate with the people with the utmost courtesy, dignity, tranquillity, and composure, with love for the righteous and service to the faithful. May they evince such perfections and qualities as would cause all people to marvel. Such souls are worthy of being

15. The Bahá'í Life: Detachment and Sacrifice

26.1 The mystery of sacrifice is for man to yield up all that pertaineth unto him for those things that pertain unto God. And that which pertaineth unto God is compassion and mercy, pardon and forgiveness, sacrifice and generosity, quickening the souls and igniting the fire of love in the hearts and veins.

The Bahá'í Life: Work, Crafts and Music

35.1 Every person must have an occupation, a trade or a craft, so that he may carry other people's burdens, and not himself be a burden to others.

16. The Bahá'í Community: Acquiring Spiritual and Material Knowledge

12.1 O Company of God! To each created thing, the Ancient Sovereignty hath portioned out its own perfection, its particular virtue and special excellence, so that each in its degree may become a symbol denoting the sublimity of the true Educator of humankind, and that each, even as a crystalline mirror, may tell of the grace and splendour of the Sun of Truth.

12.2 And from amongst all creatures He hath singled out man, to grant him His most wondrous gift, and hath made him to attain the bounties of the Company on high. That most precious of gifts is attainment unto His unfailing guidance, that the inner reality of humankind should become as a niche to hold this lamp; and when the scattering splendours of this light do beat against the bright glass of the heart, the heart's purity maketh the beams to blaze out even stronger than before, and to shine in glory on the minds and souls of men.

12.3 The attainment of the most great guidance is dependent upon knowledge and wisdom, and on being informed as to the mysteries of the Holy Words. Wherefore must the

loved ones of God, be they young or old, be they men or women, each one according to his capabilities, strive to acquire the various branches of knowledge, and to increase his understanding of the mysteries of the Holy Books, and his skill in marshalling the divine proofs and evidences.

12.4 The eminent Şadru's-Şudúr, who hath verily attained a most exalted station in the Retreats of Bliss, inaugurated the teaching meeting. He was the first blessed soul to lay the foundation of this momentous institution. God be praised, during the course of his life he educated persons who today are strong and eloquent advocates of the Lord God, disciples who are indeed pure and spiritual descendants of him who was so close to the Holy Threshold. After his passing, certain blessed individuals took steps to perpetuate his teaching work, and when he learned of it, this captive's heart rejoiced.

12.5 At this time, likewise, I most urgently request the friends of God to make every effort, as much as lieth within their competence, along these lines. The harder they strive to widen the scope of their knowledge, the better and more gratifying will be the result. Let the loved ones of God, whether young or old, whether male or female, each according to his capabilities, bestir themselves and spare no efforts to acquire the various current branches of knowledge, both spiritual and secular, and of the arts. Whensoever they gather in their meetings let their conversation be confined to learned subjects and to information on the knowledge of the day.

12.6 If they do thus, they will flood the world with the Manifest Light, and change this dusty earth into gardens of the Realm of Glory.

16. The Bahá'í Community: Acquiring Spiritual and Material Knowledge

22.1 Therefore, the beloved of the Lord and the handmaidens of the Merciful should, with all their heart and soul, educate children and instruct them in the school of virtue and perfection. Nor should they tolerate in this regard the least neglect or shortcoming. Surely it would be better if a child were deprived of life than to allow him to live in a state of ignorance, for that innocent child would otherwise fall prey to innumerable defects, be called to account and held responsible before God, and be despised and rejected by the people. What a grievous sin! What a dire error!

22.2 The first duty of the loved ones of God and the handmaidens of the Merciful is to strive by every possible means to educate all children, girls and boys alike. For the latter are even as the former; there is no difference whatsoever between them. The ignorance of either is blameworthy; the unawareness of either is reprehensible. "Are they equal, those who know and those who do not know?"

16. The Bahá'í Community: Feasts and Holy Days

29.1. On the days pertaining to the Abhá Beauty and the Primal Point—that is to say, these nine days—occupation with trade, commerce, industry, and agriculture is not permitted and, likewise, the performance of functions and duties in service to the government.

30.1 In brief, every nation has a day to mark as a holiday which they celebrate with joy. In the sacred laws of God in every cycle and dispensation, there are blessed feasts, holidays and workless days. On such days no kind of occupation, commerce, industry, agriculture, or the like, is allowed. All work is unlawful. All must enjoy themselves, gather together, hold general meetings, become as one assembly, so that the oneness, unity and harmony of the people may be demonstrated in the eyes of all. As it is a blessed day it should not be neglected or left without results by making it a day limited to the fruits of mere pleasure. During such blessed days institutions should be founded that may be of permanent benefit and value to the people so that in their conversations and in history it may become widely known that such a good work was inaugurated on such a feast day. Therefore, the intelligent must look searchingly into conditions to find out what important affair, what philanthropic institutions are most needed, and what foundations should be laid for the community on that particular day, so that they may be established. For example, if they find that the community needs morality, then they may lay down the foundation of good morals on that day. If the community be in need of spreading sciences and widening the circle of knowledge, on that day they should proceed in that direction, that is to say, direct the thoughts of all the people to that philanthropic cause. If, however, the community is in need of widening the circle of commerce or industry or agriculture, they should inaugurate the means of attaining the desired aim. If the community needs protection, proper support and care of orphans, they should act upon the welfare of the orphans, and so forth. Such undertakings as are beneficial to the poor, the weak and the helpless should be pursued in order that, on that day, through the unity of all and through great meetings, results may be obtained, the glory and blessings of that day may be declared and manifest.

30.2 Likewise in this wonderful Dispensation this day [Naw-Rúz] is a blessed day. The friends of God should be confirmed in service and servitude. With one another they must be in the utmost harmony, love and oneness, clasping hands, engaged in the commemoration of the Blessed Beauty and thinking of the great results that may be obtained on such a blessed day.

30.3 Today, there is no result or fruit greater than guiding the people.... Undoubtedly, the friends of God, upon such a day, must leave tangible philanthropic or ideal traces that should reach all mankind and not only pertain to the Bahá'ís.

30.4 In all the prophetic Dispensations, philanthropic affairs were confined to their respective peoples only—with the exception of small matters, such as charity, which it was permissible to extend to others. But in this wonderful Dispensation, philanthropic undertakings are for all humanity, without any exception, because this is the manifestation

of the mercifulness of God. Therefore, every universal matter—that is, one that belongs to all the world of humanity—is divine; and every matter that is sectarian and private is not universal in character—that is, it is limited. Therefore, my hope is that the friends of God, every one of them, may become as the mercy of God to all mankind.

17. Teaching the Faith : Arise to Teach

10.1 I hope that, through the bounties of Him Who quickeneth the spirits, thou mayest not for a moment remain still, nor be deterred from pulsating like unto an artery in the body of the world, that thou mayest ever breathe the spirit of life into the hearts and enable the souls to soar in the realms above.

14.1 The friends of God should weave bonds of fellowship with others and show absolute love and affection towards them. These links have a deep influence on people and they will listen. When the friends sense receptivity to the Word of God, they should deliver the Message with wisdom. They must first try and remove any apprehensions in the people they teach. In fact, every one of the believers should choose one person every year and try to establish ties of friendship with him, so that all his fear would disappear. Only then, and gradually, must he teach that person. This is the best method.

18. The Advancement of Civilization : Attitude Towards Government and Politics

14.1 By its nature, human society standeth in need of essential relations and rules, for otherwise it would not enjoy peace and protection, nor experience happiness and security. Without them, the sacred glory of humankind would remain unmanifested and the desire of all hearts would remain unrealized. Countries would not prosper, nor would cities and villages find order and adornment. The affairs of the world would fail to be regulated and the development of the human race would be rendered impossible. There would be no tranquillity or peace of mind. The virtues of the human world would remain unmanifested and the candle of the bestowals of the All-Merciful would remain unlit. Human reality would fail to discover the secrets of the world of being or to apprehend the all-embracing wisdom of the Almighty. Marvellous arts and sciences would not be diffused, great discoveries would not be made, and the earth would not become the observatory of endless stars. Human invention and industry would not astonish every mind; the East and the West would not freely communicate; and the power of steam would not join together the distant regions of the earth.

14.2 ... Religion may be regarded as the spirit of life and the government as the agent of deliverance. Religion is even as the resplendent sun and the government as the vernal clouds. These two effulgent luminaries, even as twin shining stars, cast from the horizon of this world their radiance upon humanity. One illumineth the realm of the spirit and the other adorneth the domain of earthly existence. One causeth human conscience

to reveal its hidden gems and the other turneth this nether world into the garden of paradise. Through their influence this world of dust becometh the envy of the realm of heaven and this abode of darkness the object of longing of the kingdom of light.... Our meaning is that these two mighty agents, even as milk and honey, or as twin lodestars, confirm and assist each other. Thus to affront one is to betray the other, and to disobey one is to sin grievously against the other.

17.1 O thou servant of Bahá! Thou hast asked regarding involvement in government affairs. In America it is required that the people shall take part in elections. This is a necessary matter and it is not possible to be excused from it. My meaning regarding not meddling in the affairs of government is that the friends of God should not engage in any mischief or move or act in a manner that runneth counter to the considered views of the government. It is, however, necessary to follow the laws and regulations of the nation. Now, as the government of America is republican in form, all the inhabitants, through the election of officials, must needs take part in the affairs of the republic.

19. The Covenant and Administration: The Covenant

5.1 Were not the mighty stronghold of the Cause of God to remain protected by the power of the Covenant, there would arise in a single day a thousand different sects among the Bahá'ís, even as was the case in former Dispensations. But in this holy Dispensation, to ensure the preservation of the Cause of God and to avoid dissension amongst His people, the Blessed Beauty—may my soul be a sacrifice unto Him—hath, through the agency of His supreme pen, established a Covenant and Testament and appointed a Centre, who is the expounder of the Book and the dispeller of discord. Whatsoever this Centre doth write or say is conformable to the truth and free from error under the protection of the Blessed Beauty.

20. The Covenant and Administration: Turn to the Universal House of Justice

20.1 All other ordinances are subservient to faith, certitude, confidence, and understanding. This blessed cycle being however the greatest of all divine cycles, it embraceth all spiritual and temporal matters, and is endowed with the utmost power and sovereignty.

20.2 Therefore those matters of major importance which constitute the foundation of the Law of God are explicitly recorded in the Text, but subsidiary laws are left to the House of Justice. The wisdom of this is that the times never remain the same, for change is a necessary quality and an essential attribute of this world, and of time and place. Therefore the House of Justice will take action accordingly.

20.3 Let it not be imagined that the House of Justice will take any decision according to its own concepts and opinions. God forbid! The Supreme House of Justice will

take decisions and establish laws through the inspiration and confirmation of the Holy Spirit, because it is in the safekeeping and under the shelter and protection of the Ancient Beauty, and obedience to its decisions is a bounden and essential duty and an absolute obligation, and there is no escape for anyone.

20.4 Say, O people: Verily, the Supreme House of Justice is under the wings of your Lord, the Compassionate, the All-Merciful, that is, under His protection, His care, and His shelter; for He has commanded the firm believers to obey that blessed, sanctified and all-subduing body, whose sovereignty is divinely ordained and of the Kingdom of Heaven and whose laws are inspired and spiritual.

20.5 Briefly, this is the wisdom of referring the laws of society to the House of Justice. In the religion of Islám, similarly, not every ordinance was explicitly revealed; nay, not a tenth part of a tenth part was included in the Text; although all matters of major importance were specifically referred to, there were undoubtedly thousands of laws which were unspecified. These were devised by the divines of a later age according to the laws of Islamic jurisprudence and individual divines made conflicting deductions from the original revealed ordinances. All these were enforced. Today this process of deduction is the right of the body of the House of Justice, and the deductions and conclusions of individual learned men have no authority, unless they are endorsed by the House of Justice. The difference is precisely this, that from the conclusions and endorsements of the body of the House of Justice whose members are elected by and known to the worldwide Bahá'í community, no differences will arise; whereas the conclusions of individual divines and scholars would definitely lead to differences, and result in schism, division, and dispersion. The oneness of the Word would be destroyed, the unity of the Faith would disappear, and the edifice of the Faith of God would be shaken.