

Spiritual Civilization

*...it behooves us all to be lovers of truth. ...Let us see the light wherever it shines...
Let us inhale the perfume of the rose from the midst of thorns which surround it;
let us drink the running water from every pure spring.*
‘Abdu’l-Bahá

1. O ‘Alí Haydar! O thou who hast risen to serve My Cause and art engaged in magnifying the praise of God, the Lord of the mighty throne! Unto the emblems of justice and the exponents of equity it is indubitably clear and evident that this Wronged One, strengthened by the transcendent power of the Kingdom, is seeking to efface from among the peoples and kindreds of the earth every evidence of disorder, discord, dissension, differences or divisions; and it is for no other reason but this great, this momentous object that He hath again and again been cast into prison and many a day and a night hath been subjected to chains and fetters. Blessed are they that judge this impregnable Cause, this glorious Announcement, with fairness and equity.

Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh / 17.

2. We have erewhile declared—and Our Word is the truth—: “Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship.” Whatsoever hath led the children of men to shun one another, and hath caused dissensions and divisions amongst them, hath, through the revelation of these words, been nullified and abolished.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh: XLIII.

3. Overstep not the bounds of moderation, and deal justly with them that serve thee. Bestow upon them according to their needs, and not to the extent that will enable them to lay up riches for themselves, to deck their persons, to embellish their homes, to acquire the things that are of no benefit unto them, and to be numbered with the extravagant. Deal with them with undeviating justice, so that none among them may either suffer want, or be pampered with luxuries. This is but manifest justice.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh: CXIV.

4. Dispute not with anyone concerning the things of this world and its affairs, for God hath abandoned them to such as have set

their affection upon them. Out of the whole world He hath chosen for Himself the hearts of men—hearts which the hosts of revelation and of utterance can subdue. Thus hath it been ordained by the Fingers of Bahá, upon the Tablet of God’s irrevocable decree, by the behest of Him Who is the Supreme Ordainer, the All-Knowing.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh: CXXVIII.

5. Exalted, immensely exalted is He Who hath removed differences and established harmony. Glorified, infinitely glorified is He Who hath caused discord to cease, and decreed solidarity and unity. Praised be God, the Pen of the Most High hath lifted distinctions from between His servants and handmaidens, and, through His consummate favours and all-encompassing mercy, hath conferred upon all a station and rank of the same plane. He hath broken the back of vain imaginings with the sword of utterance and hath obliterated the perils of idle fancies through the pervasive power of His might.

Bahá’u’lláh, from a Tablet translated from the Persian

6. All should know, and in this regard attain the splendours of the sun of certitude, and be illumined thereby: Women and men have been and will always be equal in the sight of God. The Dawning-Place of the Light of God sheddeth its radiance upon all with the same effulgence. Verily God created women for men, and men for women. The most beloved of people before God are the most steadfast and those who have surpassed others in their love for God, exalted be His glory....

*Additional Tablets and Extracts from Tablets
Revealed by Bahá’u’lláh*

7. O Son of My Handmaid!
Wouldst thou seek the grace of the Holy Spirit, enter into fellowship with the righteous, for he hath drunk the cup of eternal life at the hands of the immortal Cupbearer and even as the true morn doth quicken and illumine the hearts of the dead.

Bahá’u’lláh, The Hidden Words / Part Two: 58.

8. Even as Jesus said: “Ye must be born again.”[*John 3:7*] Again He saith: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”[*John 3:5–6*] The purport of these words is that whosoever in every dispensation is born of the Spirit and is quickened by the breath of the Manifestation of Holiness, he verily is of those that have attained unto “life” and “resurrection” and have entered into the “paradise” of the love of God.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán* / Part Two.

Writings from *Paris Talks*: Addresses given by ‘Abdu’l Bahá in Paris, France, 1911

9. Theosophical Society, Paris

The fifth cause of Bahá'u'lláh is: Prejudices of Religion, Race or Sect destroy the foundation of Humanity

All the divisions in the world, hatred, war and bloodshed, are caused by one or other of these prejudices.

The whole world must be looked upon as one single country, all the nations as one nation, all men as belonging to one race. Religions, races, and nations are all divisions of man’s making only, and are necessary only in his thought; before God there are neither Persians, Arabs, French nor English; God is God for all, and to Him all creation is one. We must obey God, and strive to follow Him by leaving all our prejudices and bringing about peace on earth.

10. The sixth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: Equal opportunity of the means of Existence

Every human being has the right to live; they have a right to rest, and to a certain amount of well-being. As a rich man is able to live in his palace surrounded by luxury and the greatest comfort, so should a poor man be able to have the necessities of life. Nobody should die of hunger; everybody should have sufficient clothing; one man should not live in

excess while another has no possible means of existence.

Let us try with all the strength we have to bring about happier conditions, so that no single soul may be destitute.

11. The seventh principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: The Equality of Men—equality before the Law

The Law must reign, and not the individual; thus will the world become a place of beauty and true brotherhood will be realized. Having attained solidarity, men will have found truth.

The eighth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: Universal Peace

A Supreme Tribunal shall be elected by the peoples and governments of every nation, where members from each country and government shall assemble in unity. All disputes shall be brought before this Court, its mission being to prevent war.

12. The ninth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: That Religion should not concern itself with Political Questions

Religion is concerned with things of the spirit, politics with things of the world. Religion has to work with the world of thought, whilst the field of politics lies with the world of external conditions.

It is the work of the clergy to educate the people, to instruct them, to give them good advice and teaching so that they may progress spiritually. With political questions they have nothing to do.

13. The tenth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: Education and Instruction of Women

Women have equal rights with men upon earth; in religion and society they are a very important element. As long as women are prevented from attaining their highest possibilities, so long will men be unable to achieve the greatness which might be theirs.

The eleventh principle of Bahá'u'lláh is:
The Power of the Holy Spirit, by which alone
Spiritual Development is achieved

It is only by the breath of the Holy Spirit that spiritual development can come about. No matter how the material world may progress, no matter how splendidly it may adorn itself, it can never be anything but a lifeless body unless the soul is within, for it is the soul that animates the body; the body alone has no real significance. Deprived of the blessings of the Holy Spirit the material body would be inert.

14. Here are, very briefly explained, some of the principles of Bahá'u'lláh.

In short, it behooves us all to be lovers of truth. Let us seek her in every season and in every country, being careful never to attach ourselves to personalities. Let us see the light wherever it shines, and may we be enabled to recognize the light of truth no matter where it may arise. Let us inhale the perfume of the rose from the midst of thorns which surround it; let us drink the running water from every pure spring.

Since I arrived in Paris, it has given me much pleasure to meet such Parisians as you are, for praise be to God, you are intelligent, unprejudiced, and you long to know the truth. You have in your hearts the love of humanity, and as far as you are able, you exert yourselves in the cause of charitable work and in the bringing about of unity; this is especially what Bahá'u'lláh desired.

It is for this reason that I am so happy to be among you, and I pray for you, that you may be receptacles for the Blessings of God, and that you may be the means of spreading spirituality throughout this country.

You already have a wonderful material civilization and in like manner shall spiritual civilization be yours.

15. O my Lord and my Hope! Help Thou Thy loved ones to be steadfast in Thy mighty Covenant, to remain faithful to Thy manifest Cause, and to carry out the commandments Thou didst set down for them in Thy Book of Splendors; that they may become banners of guidance and lamps of the Company above, wellsprings of Thine infinite wisdom, and stars that lead aright, as they shine down from the supernal sky.

Verily, art Thou the Invincible, the Almighty, the All-Powerful.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Personal Prayers

Reflections on the Text

Discussion
