

EQUITABLE ECONOMY

O God, my God! Give me to drink from the cup of Thy bestowal and illumine my face with the light of guidance. Make me firm in the path of faithfulness, assist me to be steadfast in Thy mighty Covenant, and suffer me to be numbered with Thy chosen servants. Unlock before my face the doors of abundance, grant me deliverance, and sustain me, through means I cannot reckon, from the treasuries of heaven. Suffer me to turn my face toward the countenance of Thy generosity and to be entirely devoted to Thee, O Thou Who art merciful and compassionate! To those that stand fast and firm in Thy Covenant Thou, verily, art gracious and generous. All praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds! — *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

The community which has neither poverty nor riches will always have the noblest principles.—*Plato*

An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal ailment of all republics.—*Plutarch*

Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.—*Proverbs 16:8*

Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary.—*Martin*

Luther King, Jr.

Human rights are not only violated by terrorism, repression or assassination, but also by unfair economic structures that creates huge inequalities.—*Pope Francis*

Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker.—*Proverbs 14:31*

The human experience is essentially spiritual in nature: it is rooted in the inner reality—or what some call the ‘soul’—that we all share in common. The culture of consumerism, however, has tended to reduce human beings to competitive, insatiable consumers of goods and to objects of manipulation by the market. Commonly held views have assumed the existence of an intractable conflict between what people really want (i.e. to consume more) and what humanity needs (i.e. equitable access to resources). How, then, can we resolve the paralyzing contradiction that, on the one hand, we desire a world of peace and prosperity, while, on the other, much of economic and psychological theory depicts human beings as slaves to self-interest? The faculties needed to construct a more just and sustainable social order—moderation, justice, love, reason, sacrifice and service to the common good—have too often been dismissed as naïve ideals. Yet, it is these, and related qualities that must be harnessed to overcome the traits of ego, greed, apathy and violence, which are often rewarded by the market and political forces driving current patterns of unsustainable consumption and production.—*Bahá’í International Community*

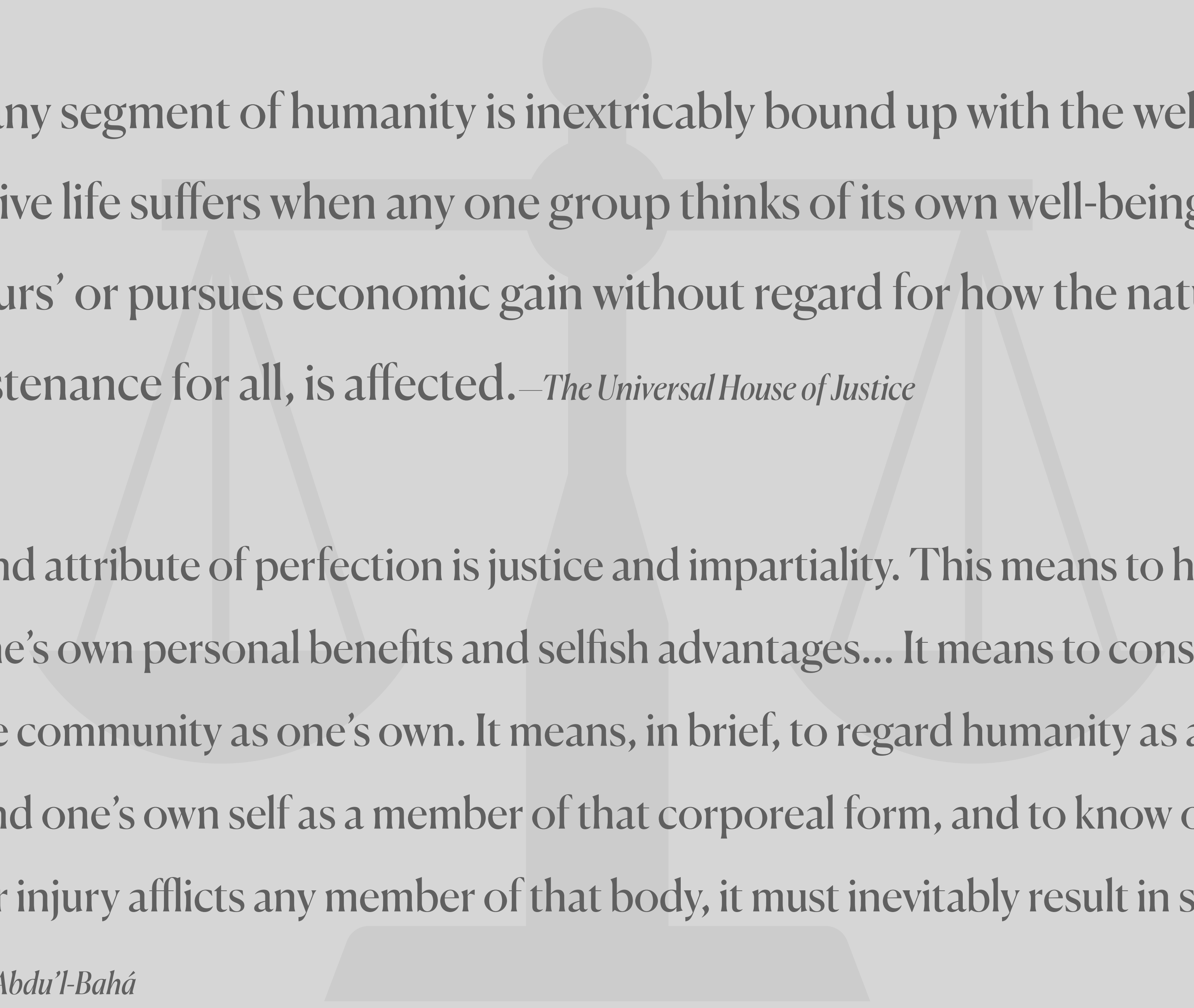
There's enough on this planet for everyone's needs but not for everyone's greed.—*Mahatma Gandhi*

Just as the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say 'thou shalt not' to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?—*Pope Francis*

Ipity the man who wants a coat so cheap that the man or woman who produces the cloth will starve in the process.—*Benjamin Harrison*

The time has come when those who preach the dogmas of materialism, whether of the east or of the west, whether of capitalism or socialism, must give account of the moral stewardship they have presumed to exercise. Where is the “new world” promised by these ideologies? ...Why is the vast majority of the world’s peoples sinking ever deeper into hunger and wretchedness when wealth on a scale undreamed of by the Pharaohs, the Caesars, or even the imperialist powers of the nineteenth century is at the disposal of the present arbiters of human affairs?—*The Universal House of Justice*

There is nothing new about poverty. What is new, however, is that we have the resources to get rid of it...The rich nations must use their vast resources of wealth to develop the underdeveloped, school the unschooled, and feed the unfed. Ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation. No individual or nation can be great if it does not have a concern for ‘the least of these’.—*Martin Luther King, Jr.*



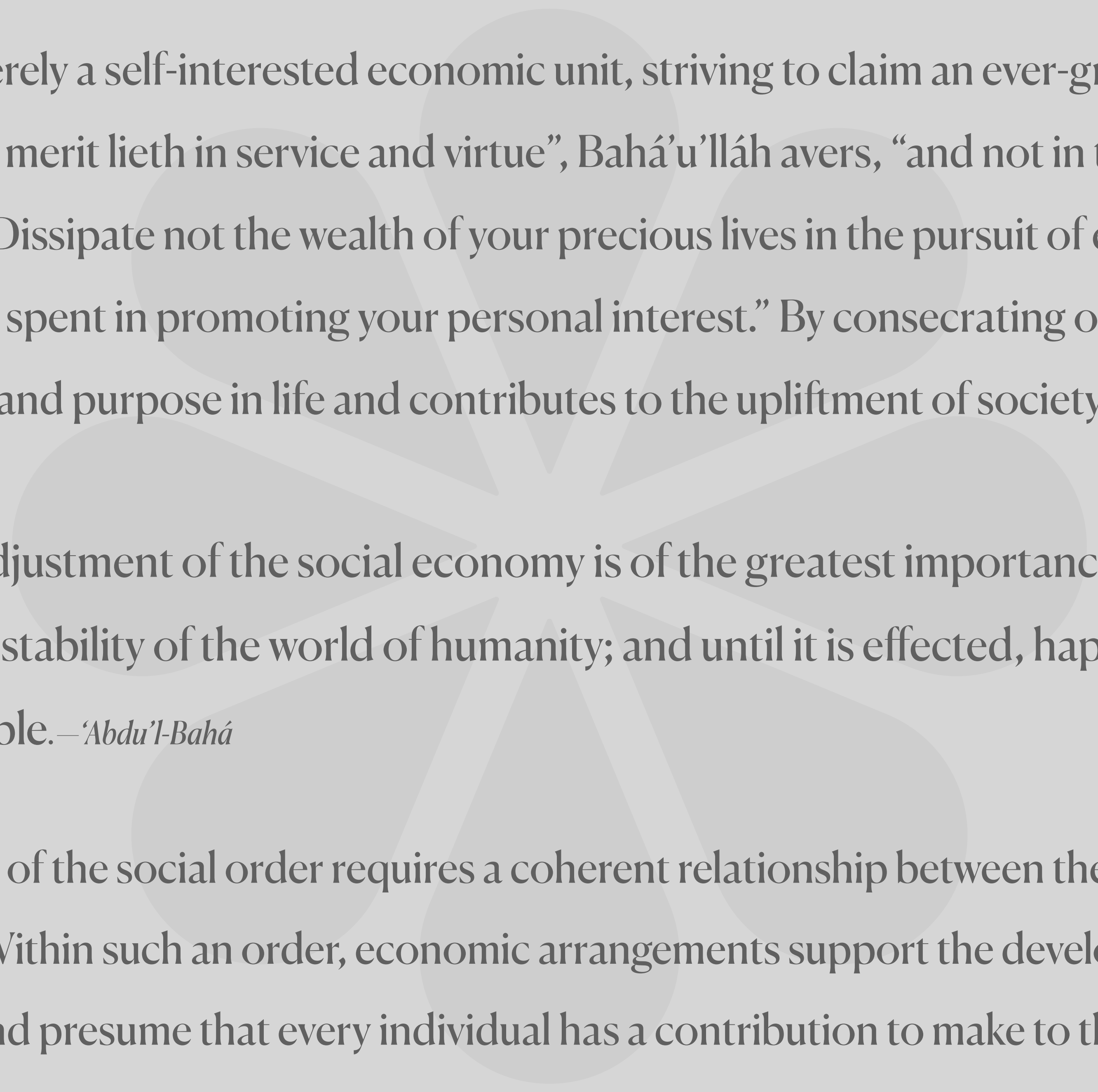
The welfare of any segment of humanity is inextricably bound up with the welfare of the whole. Humanity's collective life suffers when any one group thinks of its own well-being in isolation from that of its neighbours' or pursues economic gain without regard for how the natural environment, which provides sustenance for all, is affected.—*The Universal House of Justice*

The second attribute of perfection is justice and impartiality. This means to have no regard for one's own personal benefits and selfish advantages... It means to consider the welfare of the community as one's own. It means, in brief, to regard humanity as a single individual, and one's own self as a member of that corporeal form, and to know of a certainty that if pain or injury afflicts any member of that body, it must inevitably result in suffering for all the rest. —*Abdu'l-Bahá*

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. —*Matthew 6:19-21*

O you who believe! Stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just; that is next to piety; and fear God. For God is well acquainted with all that ye do. —*The Quran*

Take from this world only to the measure of your needs, and forgo that which exceedeth them. Observe equity in all your judgements, and transgress not the bounds of justice, nor be of them that stray from its path. —*Bahá'u'lláh*



The individual is not merely a self-interested economic unit, striving to claim an ever-greater share of the world's material resources. “Man’s merit lieth in service and virtue”, Bahá’u’lláh avers, “and not in the pageantry of wealth and riches.” And further: “Dissipate not the wealth of your precious lives in the pursuit of evil and corrupt affection, nor let your endeavours be spent in promoting your personal interest.” By consecrating oneself to the service of others, one finds meaning and purpose in life and contributes to the upliftment of society itself.—*The Universal House of Justice*

This readjustment of the social economy is of the greatest importance inasmuch as it ensures the stability of the world of humanity; and until it is effected, happiness and prosperity are impossible.—*‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

The progress and vitality of the social order requires a coherent relationship between the material and spiritual dimensions of human life. Within such an order, economic arrangements support the development of just and peaceful human relations and presume that every individual has a contribution to make to the betterment of society.

—*Bahá’í International Community*

We must rapidly begin the shift from a “thing-oriented” society to a “person-oriented” society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered...True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice, which produces beggars needs restructuring. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth...—*Martin Luther King Jr.*

Every choice... as employee or employer, producer or consumer, borrower or lender, benefactor or beneficiary—leaves a trace, and the moral duty to lead a coherent life demands that one’s economic decisions be in accordance with lofty ideals, that the purity of one’s aims be matched by the purity of one’s actions to fulfil those aims... the friends everywhere should... using the opportunities their circumstances offer them, make their own individual and collective contributions to economic justice and social progress wherever they reside.

—*The Universal House of Justice*