

NEED FOR AN EDUCATOR

When we consider existence, we observe that the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the human realms, each and all, are in need of an educator. A garden is in need of a gardener. To yield a plentiful harvest, the land is in need of a farmer. If a man is left alone in the wilderness, he will take on the ways of the animal. If he is educated, he can reach the greatest heights of accomplishment. Were it not for educators, there would be no civilization.

Education is of three kinds: material, human, and spiritual. Material education is concerned with the development of the body. Human education is about civilization and progress. It deals with governance, social order, human welfare, commerce and industry, arts and sciences, momentous discoveries, and great undertakings. Spiritual education consists in acquiring divine perfections. This is true education, for by its aid the spiritual nature, the higher nature, of the human being is developed.

In order to progress, humanity needs an educator who has clear authority as a material, human, and spiritual educator. Should anyone say "I am endowed with great intelligence, and I have no need for such an educator," he would be denying the obvious. It would be like a child saying, "I have no need of education; I will act according to my own thinking and intelligence and will achieve excellence by myself."

Humanity has always been in need of such a perfect educator, one who can help it organize matters related to the nourishment and health of the body, can inspire it to advance in knowledge, invention and discovery, and, most importantly, can breathe into it the life of the spirit. No ordinary human being is able to achieve these formidable tasks. Only the Manifestations of God have the power to accomplish them. These are chosen Souls Who are sent by God from time to time to be the universal Educators of humanity.



GOD CAN ONLY BE KNOWN THROUGH HIS MANIFESTATIONS

The knowledge of Him, Who is the Origin of all things, and attainment unto Him, are impossible save through knowledge of, and attainment unto, these luminous Beings who proceed from the Sun of Truth.

—Bahá'u'lláh

The Person of the Manifestation hath ever been the representative and mouthpiece of God. He, in truth, is the Dayspring of God's most excellent Titles, and the Dawning-Place of His exalted Attributes.

—Bahá'u'lláh

Be ye assured, moreover, that the works and acts of each and every one of these Manifestations of God, nay whatever pertaineth unto them, and whatsoever they may manifest in the future, are all ordained by God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose.

—Bahá'u'lláh

NEED FOR AN EDUCATOR

All men have been created to carry forward an ever-
advancing civilization.

—Bahá'u'lláh

The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His
glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare
those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their
true and inmost selves.

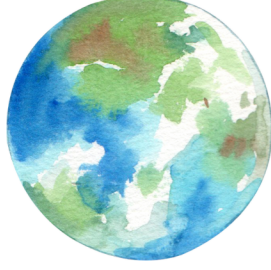
—Bahá'u'lláh

God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is
twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men
from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to
the light of true understanding. The second is to
ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and
provide all the means by which they can be
established.

—Bahá'u'lláh

Men at all times and under all conditions stand in
need of one to exhort them, guide them and to
instruct and teach them.

—Bahá'u'lláh



GOD CAN ONLY BE KNOWN THROUGH HIS MANIFESTATIONS

Consider the infinite universe. Is it possible that it could
have been created without a Creator? Or that the reality
of the Creator could ever be comprehended by that
which He created? If we observe the entire creation, we
see that whatever is lower is unable to comprehend the
power of that which is higher. So the stone and the tree,
however much they may evolve, can never imagine the
powers of sight and hearing. The animal can never
comprehend the reality of the human being and become
aware of the powers of the human spirit. Therefore how
can we, the created, understand the reality of our
Creator?

Although our understanding can never reach God, we
are not deprived of knowing Him. From time to time a
special Being appears on earth who is the Manifestation
of God. All the perfection, the bounty, and the splendor
that belong to God are visible in these Holy
Manifestations, like the rays of the sun that appear in a
clear, polished mirror. To say that the mirror reflects the
sun does not mean that the sun has descended from its
heights and become incorporated into the mirror.
Likewise, God does not descend from the heaven of
sanctity to this plane of existence. What is meant is this:
All that humanity knows, learns, and understands of the
names and attributes and perfections of God refers to
His Holy Manifestations.

ONENESS OF RELIGION

We must be lovers of light no matter from what lamp it appears. We must be lovers of the rose no matter in what garden it blooms. We must be seekers of truth no matter from what source it comes. Attachment to one lamp can prevent us from appreciating the light when it shines in another. In seeking the truth, we must rid ourselves of preconceived notions and give up our prejudices. If our cup is full of self, there is no room in it for the water of life.

Religion is the light of the world. It guides our steps and opens to us the doors of unending happiness. When we investigate the teachings of all the great religions, free from the restrictions of dogmatic beliefs and blind imitation, we come to realize that they rest on the same foundation. They all reveal the knowledge of God. They seek the advancement of the world of humanity.

There are, of course, differences among the social laws and regulations propagated by each religion according to the requirements of time and place. But in their essence all religions are one. They cultivate faith, knowledge, certitude, justice, piety, high-mindedness, trustworthiness, love of God, and charity. They teach purity, detachment, humility, forbearance, patience, and constancy. These human virtues are renewed in every Dispensation.

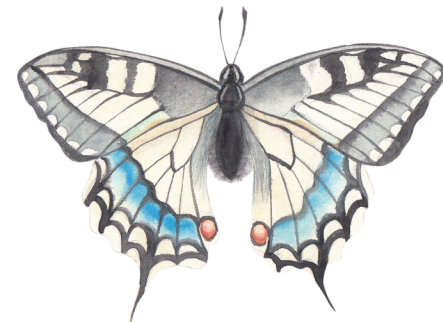
It is unfortunate that, because of prejudices and blind imitation, many are not able to see the underlying oneness of religion. God's guidance to humanity is truth, and truth has no divisions; it is one. If we investigate the truth independently, setting aside preconceived notions, our search will lead to unity. Religion should unify us; it must establish bonds of love among people. If it becomes the cause of enmity and strife, its absence is preferable.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Religion must be in conformity with science. God has endowed us with reason that we may perceive what is true. Science and religion are both expected to meet the standards of reason. Therefore, they ought to be in agreement with each other. They are the two wings upon which human intelligence can soar to great heights, the two wings with which humanity can fly. One wing is not sufficient.

Science is a bestowal of God. It discovers the laws of the physical world and enables us to overcome the limitations nature has imposed on us. With the aid of scientific instruments, we see things invisible to the naked eye and communicate across vast distances in an instant. Science unites the present and the past and penetrates the mysteries of the future. The progress of a people depends on scientific attainments.

The religion of God is the promoter of truth, the supporter of knowledge, and the civilizer of the human race. Without religion, science becomes a tool to advance materialism, leading eventually to despair. When religion is opposed to science, it becomes mere superstition. If religion and science walk together in harmony, much of the hatred and bitterness now bringing misery to humanity will come to an end.



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGION

First and foremost among these favors, which the Almighty hath conferred upon man, is the gift of understanding... This gift giveth man the power to discern the truth in all things, leadeth him to that which is right, and helpeth him to discover the secrets of creation.

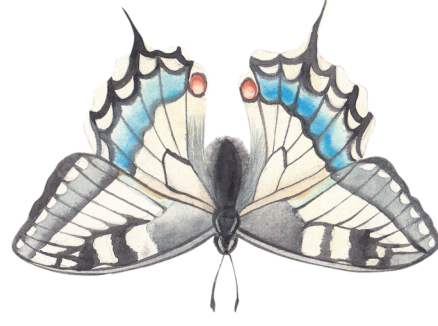
—Bahá'u'lláh

Look at the world and ponder a while upon it. It unveileth the book of its own self before thine eyes and revealeth that which the Pen of thy Lord, the Fashioner, the All-Informed, hath inscribed therein.

—Bahá'u'lláh

Knowledge is as wings to man's life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone.

—Bahá'u'lláh



ONENESS OF RELIGION

There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God.

—Bahá'u'lláh

Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship.

—Bahá'u'lláh

The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race...

—Bahá'u'lláh

The religion of God is for love and unity; make it not the cause of enmity or dissension.

—Bahá'u'lláh





ONENESS OF HUMANITY

A garden in which flowers of many colors and fragrances grow side by side is pleasing to the eye. And though different, each flower is refreshed by the same rain and receives the warmth of one sun. This is also true of humanity. It is made up of many races and colors. But all come from the same God, and all have the same origin. The diversity in the human family should be a source of harmony, as it is in music where different notes blend together to make a perfect chord.

Unity is necessary to existence. Love is the very cause of life. In the material world, the elements of all things are held together by the law of attraction. The law of attraction brings together certain elements in the form of a beautiful flower. But when that attraction is taken away, the flower will decompose and cease to exist. So it is with humanity. Attraction, harmony, and unity are the forces that hold humanity together.

Bahá'u'lláh has made a design for the uniting of all the peoples of the world. We should make every effort to draw them into this circle of unity. When we meet people of races, nationalities, religions, and opinions different than our own, we should not allow these differences to become barriers between us. We should think of them as different colored roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity and be glad to be among them.



JUSTICE

Difference of capacity in individuals is fundamental to human existence. Therefore, it is not possible for all people to be equal in every respect. Yet human affairs, in their entirety, should be governed by the principle of justice. Justice must be sacred, and the rights of every person must be safeguarded.

Justice is not limited; it is a universal quality. It must operate in all departments of human life. Each and every member of society should enjoy the benefits of civilization, because we all belong to the body of humanity. If one member of this body is in anguish or distress, all the other members inevitably suffer. How can one be afflicted and the others be at ease? Today's society lacks the necessary reciprocity and symmetry; it is not well arranged. Laws and principles are required that will ensure the well-being and happiness of the entire human family.

Justice is established on the pillars of reward and punishment. Governments ruled by those without faith, with no fear of Divine retribution, will execute unjust laws. Hope for reward and fear of punishment are both needed if oppression is to be prevented. Legislators and administrators of the laws must be aware of the spiritual consequences of their decisions. Rulers who believe that the consequences of their actions will follow them beyond this earthly life and who know that their judgments will be weighed in the balance of Divine justice will surely avoid tyranny and oppression.



ONENESS OF HUMANITY

The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.

—Bahá'u'lláh

So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.

—Bahá'u'lláh

Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you.

—Bahá'u'lláh

It behooveth man to adhere tenaciously unto that which will promote fellowship, kindness and unity.

—Bahá'u'lláh



JUSTICE

The light of men is justice. Quench it not with the contrary winds of oppression and tyranny.

—Bahá'u'lláh

No radiance an compare with that of justice. The organization of the world and the tranquillity of mankind depend upon it.

—Bahá'u'lláh

That which traineth the world is justice, for it is upheld by two pillars, reward and punishment. These two pillars are the sources of life to the world.

—Bahá'u'lláh

WIDENING GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR



Today, because of the lack of reciprocity and harmonious relations, some members of society are satisfied, living in great comfort and luxury, while others are in want of food and shelter. Some are enormously rich, and others live in utmost poverty.

The laws of society must be formulated and enforced in such a way that it is not possible for a few to amass inordinate wealth and for others to be destitute. This does not mean that all must be equal, for differences in degree and capacity are inherent to creation. But the deplorable overabundance of wealth accompanied by demoralizing poverty can be abolished. If it be right for a capitalist to possess a fortune, it is equally just that the worker should have a sufficient means of existence. When we see extreme poverty, somewhere we shall find tyranny.

The essence of the matter is that Divine justice must become manifest in human conditions. The fundamentals of the whole economic condition are divine in nature and are associated with the world of the heart and spirit. The rich must give of their abundance; they must soften their hearts and cultivate a compassionate intelligence. Hearts must be so cemented together, love must become so dominant that the wealthy will most willingly take steps to establish economic adjustments permanently. They themselves must realize that it is neither just nor lawful that they should possess great wealth while there is abject poverty in the community. In this way, they will willingly give of their wealth, while retaining as much as will enable them to live comfortably.

PREJUDICE



Prejudice in all its forms—religious, racial, gender, ethnic, economic—destroys the edifice of humanity and is opposed to the commands of God. For thousands of years humanity has suffered from war and bloodshed spurred on by one or another of these prejudices. As long as they persist, humanity will not have rest.

God has sent forth His Prophets for the sole purpose of creating love and unity. All the heavenly Books are the written word of love. If they prove to be the cause of estrangement, they have become fruitless. Therefore, religious prejudice is especially opposed to the will and command of God.

National prejudice is entirely unjustifiable. Earth is one land, one country. The lines and boundaries that separate nations are imaginary; they were not created by God. People declare a river to be a boundary line between two countries, giving each side a name, whereas the river was created for both and is a natural artery for all. Is it not imagination and ignorance which impel people to make the bounties of life the cause of war and destruction?

Racial prejudice is nothing but superstition. The color of the skin of a person is merely the result of adaptations of his or her ancestors over time to climate and environment. Character is the true criterion of humanity. Excellence does not depend upon race and color. Faith, purity of heart, good deeds and praiseworthy speech are what is acceptable at the threshold of God.

For the longest time, women have been made subordinate to men and wronged. The distinction between male and female is a requirement of the physical world; in the world of the spirit they are equal. In the estimation of God, there is no distinction as to male and female. All humankind has been endowed by Him with intelligence and perception. All have the capacity to acquire virtues. There is no circumstance today in which a person's sex provides grounds for the exercise of discrimination.

According to the words of the Old Testament, God has said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This clearly applies to women as well. The human being has been created in the image of God; that is to say, divine virtues are reflected and revealed in the human reality. This is true of all humanity. How utterly untenable it is to claim that only those of one color, ethnicity or nationality were created in the likeness of God. How absurd to imply that only the wealthy were made in His image or to think a criterion for nearness to God is a high position in society. Humanity cannot attain illumination except through the abandonment of prejudices and the acquisition of the morals of the Kingdom.



WIDENING GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR

...ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits,
that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom.
Thus it is incumbent on every one to engage in
crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of
wealth, O men of understanding!

—Bahá'u'lláh

If thine eyes be turned towards mercy, forsake the
things that profit thee and cleave unto that which
will profit mankind. And if thine eyes be turned
towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbor that
which thou chooseth for thyself.

—Bahá'u'lláh

Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before
himself.

—Bahá'u'lláh

No goodly deed was or will ever be lost, for
benevolent acts are treasures preserved with God
for the benefit of those who act.

—Bahá'u'lláh

...take heed not to outstrip the bounds of
moderation and be numbered among the
extravagant.

—Bahá'u'lláh



PREJUDICE

The earth is but one country, and mankind its
citizens.

—Bahá'u'lláh

All the saplings of the world have appeared from
one Tree, and all the drops from one Ocean, and all
beings owe their existence to one Being.

—Bahá'u'lláh

That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth
himself to the service of the entire human race.

—Bahá'u'lláh

The light of a good character surpasseth the light of
the sun and the radiance thereof.

—Bahá'u'lláh

Man's distinction lieth not in ornaments or wealth,
but rather in virtuous behavior and true
understanding.

—Bahá'u'lláh

God grant you may be graciously aided under all
conditions to shatter the idols of superstition and to
tear away the veils of the imaginations of men.

—Bahá'u'lláh

Of all men the most negligent is he that disputeth
idly and seeketh to advance himself over his
brother.

—Bahá'u'lláh



EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

The physical sun, through its light and heat, reveals the reality of all things on earth. The fruit hidden in the tree appears upon its branches in response to the power of the sun. Likewise, the Sun of Truth, shining in full splendor in the spiritual sky, brings to light realities that were not apparent in the past. That is why, in this age the principle of the equality of men and women has been fully recognized and is now an established fact.

Baha'u'llah has stated in the clearest terms that in the sight of God there is no distinction between men and women. The condition of inequality that has existed throughout the ages is not the result of the superiority of men; it is simply that women have not been given the same opportunity to develop all their potentialities. In spite of the prejudice against them, however, history records the lives of numerous women who have achieved the greatest of accomplishments.

One such woman was the Persian poetess, Táhirih. She was born in the early part of the 1800s in a country where women were entirely subordinated to men. She was the first woman to accept the truth of God's new Revelation. As she witnessed the dawn of a new Day, she became convinced that the time had come for the reality of the equality of men and women to be recognized. She dedicated her energies to proclaiming this truth. Her knowledge and eloquence baffled the most learned men of her time. Although all the forces of an oppressive king and an ignorant and proud clergy were against her, not for a moment did she hesitate to speak the truth. And in the end, she gave her life for the Cause she had so firmly embraced.

To believe in that which God has not intended is ignorance and superstition. Today women should be allowed every opportunity to become educated and to assume a position of equality with men in all fields of human endeavor. Until the equality of men and women becomes a reality in this world, as it is in the spiritual realm, the real progress of humankind will not be possible.



UNIVERSAL EDUCATION

The promotion of education is a most urgent requirement of our time. No nation can achieve prosperity unless it makes education one of its central concerns. The primary reason for the decline of a people is lack of access to knowledge.

Education must begin at infancy. It is the duty of a father and mother to do their utmost to educate their children, to refine their characters according to spiritual and moral laws, and to ensure that they are trained in the arts and sciences. Mothers are the first educators of humankind; they nurse their children at the breast of knowledge. Every child must be educated; this is not a matter that can be neglected. If the parents are able to meet the necessary expense, they must do so. Otherwise the community must provide the means for the child's education.

Education should develop in every human being the desire to achieve excellence. We should become enamored of human perfection and pursue it with passion. We should aspire to spiritual distinction, to become known for the virtues of the human world—for sincerity, loyalty, service to humanity, love and justice. We must seek to be distinguished by our efforts to promote peace and unity and to foster learning. To guide people on such a path is the real task of education.



UNIVERSAL EDUCATION

It is not desirable that a man be left without knowledge or skills, for he is then but a barren tree.

—Bahá'u'lláh

Bend your minds and wills to the education of the peoples and kindreds of the earth...

—Bahá'u'lláh

Arts, crafts and sciences uplift the world of being, and are conducive to its exaltation.

—Bahá'u'lláh

In truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and a source of glory, of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him.

EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN



Women and men have been and will always be equal in the sight of God.

—Bahá'u'lláh

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other.

—Bahá'u'lláh

In this Day the Hand of divine grace hath removed all distinctions. The servants of God and His handmaidens are regarded on the same plane.



UNIVERSAL PEACE

Peace is an issue on everyone's mind. Its establishment is most urgent and vital.

Much depends, of course, on governments to take practical steps to eliminate war. Political agreements to settle disputes and to reduce arms are essential to the pursuit of peace, as are myriad forms of international collaboration among nations. Yet, no matter how important such measures, they will not lead to enduring peace if the principles discussed earlier are not established throughout the world. Unless people learn to investigate reality and come to realize that truth is one, will not age-old animosities, we must ask ourselves, continue to persist? We all have the same origin. God keeps watch over us all and trains us all through His Manifestations. Their teachings rest on the same foundation of love and fellowship. Only when the oneness of religion is acknowledged will religious strife cease and the light of religion illumine the path to peace. Is it not necessary for science and religion to work in harmony, we must further ask, to dispel the clouds of ignorance and demonstrate the falsehood of every form of prejudice, each a mighty barrier to peace? Can a peaceful world be built, is yet another question to ask, if the present inordinate disparity between the rich and the poor is not addressed in every corner of the globe? And, not until women are allowed to move into all spheres of human endeavor on equal footing with men will the violence that has characterized so much of history give way to peace and true prosperity. Rising generations must be universally educated according to such principles, otherwise every hope for peace will be shattered.

—Bahá'u'lláh

The well-being of mankind, its peace and security,
are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly
established.

UNIVERSAL
PEACE

