

MEDITATIONS ON

UPHOLDING

*Justice*

AT THE COLLECTIVE LEVEL

ELEVATE



*W*e hope that thou wilt cause the light of justice to shine more brightly.  
By the righteousness of God! Justice is a powerful force.  
It is, above all else, the conqueror of the citadels  
of the hearts and souls of men,  
and the revealer of the secrets of the world of being,  
and the standard-bearer of love and bounty.

Bahá'u'lláh

*A*t the group level, a concern for justice is the indispensable compass in collective decision making, because it is the only means by which unity of thought and action can be achieved.

Far from encouraging the punitive spirit that has often masqueraded under its name in past ages, justice is the practical expression of awareness that, in the achievement of human progress, the interests of the individual and those of society are inextricably linked.

Bahá'í International Community

*J*ustice, being violated, destroys;  
justice, being preserved, preserves:  
therefore justice must not be violated,  
lest violated justice destroy us.

Manusmriti

Each man has been placed in a post of honour, which he must not desert.

A humble workman who commits an injustice  
is as much to blame as a renowned tyrant.

Thus we all have our choice between justice and injustice.

I hope that each one of you will become just,  
and direct your thoughts towards the unity of mankind;  
that you will never harm your neighbours nor speak ill of any one;  
that you will respect the rights of all men,  
and be more concerned for the interests of others than for your own.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

*S*ocial justice will be attained only when every member of society enjoys a relative degree of material prosperity and gives due regard to the acquisition of spiritual qualities.

The solution, then, to prevailing economic difficulties is to be sought as much in the application of spiritual principles as in the implementation of scientific methods and approaches.

The Universal House of Justice

...*T*he end does not serve to justify the means.

However constructive and noble the goal,  
however significant to one's life or to the welfare of one's family,  
it must not be attained through improper means.  
Regrettably, a number of today's leaders—political, social, and religious—  
as well as some of the directors of financial markets,  
executives of multinational corporations, chiefs of commerce and industry,  
and ordinary people who succumb to social pressure  
and ignore the call of their conscience, act against this principle;  
they justify any means in order to achieve their goals.

The Universal House of Justice

*T*he light of men is Justice.

Quench it not with the contrary winds of oppression and tyranny.

The purpose of justice is the appearance of unity among men.

The ocean of divine wisdom surgeth within this exalted word,  
while the books of the world cannot contain its inner significance.

Bahá'u'lláh



*T*he perpetuation of ignorance is a most grievous form of oppression...  
Access to knowledge is the right of every human being,  
and participation in its generation, application and diffusion  
a responsibility that all must shoulder  
in the great enterprise of building a prosperous world civilisation—  
each individual according to his or her talents and abilities.  
Justice demands universal participation...  
Social change is not a project that one group of people  
carries out for the benefit of another.  
The scope and complexity of social action  
must be commensurate with the human resources available  
in a village or neighbourhood to carry it forward.  
Efforts best begin, then, on a modest scale  
and grow organically as capacity within the population develops.

The Universal House of Justice

...Justice is indeed essential to resist the vain imaginings  
and idle fancies of social and political machinations,  
to see reality with one's own eyes,  
and to identify the requirements for an equitable social order.

But then unity is essential—  
forged through consultative processes, including action and reflection—  
to achieve the power required for positive social change.

The Universal House of Justice



*W*hen perfect justice reigns in every country  
of the Eastern and Western World,  
then will the earth become a place of beauty.  
The dignity and equality of every servant of God will be acknowledged;  
the ideal of the solidarity of the human race,  
the true brotherhood of man, will be realised;  
and the glorious light of the Sun of Truth  
will illumine the souls of all men.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

*J*ustice and equity are twin Guardians  
that watch over men.

From them are revealed such blessed and perspicuous words  
as are the cause of the well-being of the world  
and the protection of the nations.

Bahá'u'lláh



*J*ust as forgiveness is one of the attributes of God's mercy,  
so is justice one of the attributes of His lordship.

The canopy of existence rests upon the pole of justice and not of forgiveness...

In sum, the proper functioning of the body politic  
depends upon justice and not forgiveness.

So what Christ meant by forgiveness and magnanimity  
is not that if another nation were to assail you; burn your homes;  
plunder your possessions; assault your wives, children, and kin;  
and violate your honour, you must submit to that tyrannical host  
and permit them to carry out every manner of iniquity and oppression.  
Rather, the words of Christ refer to private transactions between two individuals,  
stating that if one person assaults another, the injured party should forgive.

But the body politic must safeguard the rights of man...

'Abdu'l-Bahá

*I* beseech Thee, O my God,  
by all the transcendent glory of Thy Name,  
to clothe Thy loved ones in the robe of justice  
and to illumine their beings with the light of trustworthiness.

Thou art the One that hath power to do as He pleaseth  
and Who holdeth within His grasp the reins of all things, visible and invisible.

Bahá'u'lláh



*T*here is no force on earth that can equal in its conquering power  
the force of justice and wisdom.

I, verily, affirm that there is not, and hath never been,  
a host more mighty than that of justice and wisdom.

Blessed is the king who marcheth  
with the ensign of wisdom unfurled before him,  
and the battalions of justice massed in his rear.

He verily is the ornament that adorneth the brow of peace  
and the countenance of security.

There can be no doubt whatever that if the daystar of justice,  
which the clouds of tyranny have obscured, were to shed its light upon men,  
the face of the earth would be completely transformed.

Bahá'u'lláh

O my God!

O Thou Who endowest every just power and equitable dominion  
 with abiding glory and everlasting might,  
 with permanence and stability, with constancy and honour!  
 Aid Thou by Thy heavenly grace every government  
 that acteth justly towards its subjects  
 and every sovereign authority, derived from Thee,  
 that shieldeth the poor and the weak under the banner of its protection.  
 I beseech Thee, by Thy divine grace and surpassing bounty,  
 to aid this just government, the canopy of whose authority  
 is spread over vast and mighty lands and the evidences of whose justice  
 are apparent in its prosperous and flourishing regions.  
 Assist, O my God, its hosts, raise aloft its ensigns,  
 bestow influence upon its word and its utterance,  
 protect its lands, increase its honour, spread its fame, reveal its signs,  
 and unfurl its banner through Thine all-subduing power  
 and Thy resplendent might in the kingdom of creation.  
 Thou, verily, aidest whomsoever Thou willest,  
 and Thou, verily, art the Almighty, the Most Powerful.

'Abdu'l-Bahá



1. Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (Wilmette: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p.31. ↵
2. Bahá'í International Community Office of Public Information, 'The Prosperity of Humankind', commissioned by the Universal House of Justice, 3 March 1995. ↵
3. Manusmriti, translated by George Bühler, published in *Sacred Books of the East*, Volume 25, Chapter 8. ↵
4. *Paris Talks: Addresses Given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1911* (London: Bahá'í Publishing, 1972), p. 160. ↵
5. From a letter dated 2 April 2010 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith. ↵
6. From a letter dated 2 April 2010 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith. ↵
7. 'Kalimát-i-Firdawsíyyih (Words of Paradise)', published in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Wilmette:US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p.67. ↵
8. From the Ridván 2010 message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world. ↵
9. From a letter dated 27 April 2017 written by the Universal House of Justice to an individual. ↵
10. *Paris Talks: Addresses Given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1911* (London: Bahá'í Publishing, 1972), p. 155. ↵
11. Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (Wilmette: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p.13. ↵
12. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2014). ↵
13. Bahá'u'lláh, in *Bahá'í Prayers: A Selection of Prayers Revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, compiled by the United States Bahá'í Publishing Trust. ↵
14. Lawh-i-Maqsúd, published in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Wilmette:US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), pp.164-165. ↵
15. Additional Prayers Revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, available on Bahá'í Reference Library. ↵



# ELEVATE

For some questions which may help you kick-start conversations about this week's theme, take a look at our [Conversations document](#).

Visit the Elevate Hub to enjoy [more collections](#) of themes and [let us know](#) how they've supported you in your personal journey, or your efforts to improve the life of your community.

Copyright © 2020 Elevate. All rights reserved.