



MEDITATIONS ON

Change

ELEVATE

*W*e cannot segregate the human heart
from the environment outside us
and say that once one of these is reformed everything will be improved.
Man is organic with the world.
His inner life moulds the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it.
The one acts upon the other and every abiding change
in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions.

Shoghi Effendi

*I*s not the object of every Revelation
to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind,
a transformation that shall manifest itself,
both outwardly and inwardly,
that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions?

Bahá'u'lláh

In this world of being, all things must ever be made new.
Look at the material world about thee, see how it hath now been renewed.
The thoughts have changed, the ways of life have been revised,
the sciences and arts show a new vigor,
discoveries and inventions are new, perceptions are new.
How then could such a vital power as religion—
the guarantor of mankind's great advances,
the very means of attaining everlasting life,
the fosterer of infinite excellence,
the light of both worlds—not be made new?
... And this is clear: a power above and beyond the powers of nature
must needs be brought to bear, to change this black darkness into light,
and these hatreds and resentments,
grudges and spites, these endless wrangles and wars,
into fellowship and love amongst all the peoples of the earth.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

*H*umanity... is approaching today the crowning stage in a millennia-long process which has brought it from its collective infancy to the threshold of maturity—a stage that will witness the unification of the human race. Not unlike the individual who passes through the unsettled yet promising period of adolescence, during which latent powers and capacities come to light, humankind as a whole is in the midst of an unprecedented transition. Behind so much of the turbulence and commotion of contemporary life are the fits and starts of a humanity struggling to come of age. Widely accepted practices and conventions, cherished attitudes and habits, are one by one being rendered obsolete, as the imperatives of maturity begin to assert themselves.

Universal House of Justice

...We see in the revolutionary changes taking place in every sphere of life
the interaction of two fundamental processes.

One is destructive in nature, while the other is integrative;
both serve to carry humanity, each in its own way,
along the path leading towards its full maturity.

The operation of the former is everywhere apparent—
in the vicissitudes that have afflicted time-honoured institutions,
in the impotence of leaders at all levels
to mend the fractures appearing in the structure of society,
in the dismantling of social norms that have long held in check unseemly passions, and
in the despondency and indifference exhibited not only by individuals
but also by entire societies that have lost any vital sense of purpose.

Though devastating in their effects,
the forces of disintegration tend to sweep away barriers that block humanity's progress,
opening space for the process of integration to draw diverse groups together
and disclosing new opportunities for cooperation and collaboration....

[The] forces associated with the process of integration... will continue to gain in strength,
no matter how bleak the immediate horizons.

Human affairs will be utterly reorganized, and an era of universal peace inaugurated.

Universal House of Justice

*T*his age is indeed as a hundred other ages:
should ye gather the yield of a hundred ages,
and set that against the accumulated product of our times,
the yield of this one era will prove greater than that of a hundred gone before.

...But alas, a thousand times alas!

The eyes see it not, the ears are deaf,
and the hearts and minds are oblivious of this supreme bestowal.

Strive ye then, with all your hearts and souls,
to awaken those who slumber,
to cause the blind to see,
and the dead to rise.

Abdu'l-Bahá

To know this is not enough.

All knowledge is good, but it can bear no fruit except by action.

It is well to know that riches are good,
but that knowledge will not make a man rich;

he must work, he must put his knowledge into practice.

We hope the people realize and know that unity is good,
and we also hope that they will not be content to stand still in that knowledge.

Do not only say that Unity, Love and Brotherhood are good;
you must work for their realization.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

In every sphere of endeavour,
the relationships that sustain society need to be recast;
in each, the world seeks examples of how human beings should be to one another.
The economic life of humanity has recently embroiled so many people.
Injustice is tolerated with indifference
and disproportionate gain is regarded as the emblem of success.
So deeply entrenched are such pernicious attitudes
that it is hard to imagine how any one individual
can alone alter the prevailing standards
by which the relationships in this domain are governed.
Nevertheless, there are certainly practices anyone could eschew...
By applying in one's life principles of fairness and equity,
each person can uphold a standard far above the low threshold
by which the world measures itself.
Humanity is weary for want of a pattern of life to which to aspire;
we should aim for actions in our communities which will give hope to the world.

Universal House of Justice

O my God! O my God!

Thou seest me in my lowliness and weakness,
occupied with the greatest undertaking,
determined to raise Thy word among the masses
and to spread Thy teachings among Thy peoples.
How can I succeed unless Thou assist me with the breath of the Holy Spirit,
help me to triumph by the hosts of Thy glorious kingdom,
and shower upon me Thy confirmations,
which alone can change a gnat into an eagle,
a drop of water into rivers and seas, and an atom into lights and suns?
O my Lord! Assist me with Thy triumphant and effective might,
so that my tongue may utter Thy praises and attributes among all people
and my soul overflow with the wine of Thy love and knowledge.
Thou art the Omnipotent and the Doer of whatsoever Thou willest.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Say: no man can attain his true station
except through his justice.

No power can exist except through unity.
No welfare and no well-being can be attained
except through consultation.

Bahá'u'lláh

Laying the groundwork for global civilisation calls for the creation of laws and institutions that are universal in both character and authority. The effort can begin only when the concept of the oneness of humanity has been wholeheartedly embraced by those in whose hands the responsibility for decision making rests, and when the related principles are propagated through both educational systems and the media of mass communication. Once this threshold is crossed, a process will have been set in motion through which the peoples of the world can be drawn into the task of formulating common goals and committing themselves to their attainment. Only so fundamental a reorientation can protect them, too, from the age-old demons of ethnic and religious strife. Only through the dawning consciousness that they constitute a single people, will the inhabitants of the planet be enabled to turn away from the patterns of conflict that have dominated social organisation in the past and begin to learn the ways of collaboration.

The Bahá'í International Community



Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock.
Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household.

In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants,
and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle;
all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty;
all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence.

O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all,
dost shelter all, conferrest life upon all.

Thou hast endowed each and all with talents and faculties,
and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy.

O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one,
so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home.

May they all live together in perfect harmony.

O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind.

O God! Establish the Most Great Peace. Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together.

O Thou kind Father, God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love.

Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance.

Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word,
and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence.

Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving
and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

1. From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, To an individual believer, 17 February 1933. ↵
2. Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán* (Wilmette: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1989) p.240. ↵
3. *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), no. 23, pp. 52-53. ↵
4. From a message dated 2 March 2013 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of Iran. ↵
5. From a message dated 2 March 2013 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of Iran. ↵
6. *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), no. 73, pp. 111-112. ↵
7. *'Abdu'l-Bahá in London* (London: UK Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982 printing), p. 60. ↵
8. *From the Ridván 2012 message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world.* ↵
9. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, From a Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Southern States, published in *Tablets of the Divine Plan* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1993), pp.72-73. ↵
10. Bahá'u'lláh cited by the Universal House of Justice in a letter dated 27 April 2017 to an individual. ↵
11. Bahá'í International Community Office of Public Information, 'The Prosperity of Humankind', commissioned by the Universal House of Justice, 3 March 1995. ↵
12. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, cited by J.E. Esslemont, in *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), pp.98-99. ↵

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