

MEDITATIONS ON

UPHOLDING

Justice

AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

ELEVATE

*D*o not busy yourselves in your own concerns;
let your thoughts be fixed
upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind
and sanctify the hearts and souls of men.

Bahá'u'lláh

Injustice is rife.

Throughout the world it afflicts every department of life whether in the home, at the workplace, or in the public sphere as a consequence of the ill conduct of individuals, groups, or governments.

Lamenting the horrors it breeds, Bahá'u'lláh made this poignant remark:

“Justice is, in this day, bewailing its plight,
and Equity groaneth beneath the yoke of oppression.
The thick clouds of tyranny have darkened the face of the earth,
and enveloped its peoples.”

So grave a situation exists at a time of unprecedented change: opposite processes of chaos and of order interact in a spiral of turbulence that signals a transition in the spiritual and social agenda of the world as a whole.

The Universal House of Justice

① Son of Spirit!

The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice;
turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me,
and neglect it not that I may confide in thee.

By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes
and not through the eyes of others,
and shalt know of thine own knowledge
and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor.

Ponder this in thy heart; how it behoveth thee to be.

Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness.

Set it then before thine eyes.

Bahá'u'lláh

*A*t the individual level, justice is that faculty of the human soul that enables each person to distinguish truth from falsehood.

In the sight of God, Bahá'u'lláh avers, justice is “the best beloved of all things” since it permits each individual to see with his own eyes rather than the eyes of others, to know through his own knowledge rather than the knowledge of his neighbor or his group. It calls for fair-mindedness in one’s judgments, for equity in one’s treatment of others, and is thus a constant if demanding companion in the daily occasions of life.

Bahá'í International Community

*T*he essence of all that We have revealed for thee is Justice,
is for man to free himself from idle fancy and imitation,
discern with the eye of oneness His glorious handiwork,
and look into all things with a searching eye.

Bahá'u'lláh

*T*his servant beseecheth the one True God—exalted be His glory—to graciously adorn the world of humanity with justice and fair-mindedness, although in truth the latter is but one of the expressions of the former.

Verily, justice is a lamp that guideth man aright
amidst the darkness of the world
and shieldeth him from every danger.

It is indeed a shining lamp.

Bahá'u'lláh



Lord, my God and my Haven in my distress! My Shield and my Shelter in my woes!
 My Asylum and Refuge in time of need and in my loneliness my Companion!
 In my anguish my Solace, and in my solitude a loving Friend!
 The Remover of the pangs of my sorrows and the Pardoner of my sins!
 Wholly unto Thee do I turn, fervently imploring Thee with all my heart,
 my mind and my tongue, to shield me from all that runs counter to Thy will
 in this, the cycle of Thy divine unity, and to cleanse me of all defilement
 that will hinder me from seeking, stainless and unsullied, the shade of the tree of Thy grace.
 Have mercy, O Lord, on the feeble, make whole the sick, and quench the burning thirst.
 Gladden the bosom wherein the fire of Thy love doth smolder,
 and set it aglow with the flame of Thy celestial love and spirit.
 Robe the tabernacles of divine unity with the vesture of holiness, and set upon my head
 the crown of Thy favor. Illumine my face with the radiance of the orb of Thy bounty,
 and graciously aid me in ministering at Thy holy threshold.
 Make my heart overflow with love for Thy creatures and grant that I may become the sign
 of Thy mercy, the token of Thy grace, the promoter of concord amongst Thy loved ones,
 devoted unto Thee, uttering Thy commemoration
 and forgetful of self but ever mindful of what is Thine.
 O God, my God! Stay not from me the gentle gales of Thy pardon and grace,
 and deprive me not of the wellsprings of Thine aid and favor.
 'Neath the shade of Thy protecting wings let me nestle,
 and cast upon me the glance of Thine all-protecting eye.
 Loose my tongue to laud Thy name amidst Thy people, that my voice may be raised in great
 assemblies and from my lips may stream the flood of Thy praise.
 Thou art, in all truth, the Gracious, the Glorified, the Mighty, the Omnipotent.

*N*o one is free from the exacting demands of justice;
all will be called upon to continuously re-examine
their own attitudes, values, and relationships with others.

Bahá'í International Community

*T*he 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

*T*he 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

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

*B*e not dismayed if your endeavours are dismissed as utopian by the voices that would oppose any suggestion of fundamental change. Trust in the capacity of this generation to disentangle itself from the embroilments of a divided world. To discharge your responsibilities, you will have to show forth courage, the courage of those who cling to standards of rectitude, who champion the cause of justice, whose lives are characterised by purity of thought and action, and whose purpose is directed by love and indomitable faith.

The Universal House of Justice

1. 'Lawh-i-Dunyá', published in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Wilmette, US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p.86. ↵
2. From a message dated 21 December 2006 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of Egypt. ↵
3. *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette, US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1985), Arabic no.2, pp.3-4. ↵
4. Bahá'í International Community Office of Public Information, 'The Prosperity of Humankind', commissioned by the Universal House of Justice, 3 March 1995. ↵
5. 'Asl-i-Kullu'l-Khayr', published in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Wilmette, US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p.157. ↵
6. 'Responses to questions of Mánikchí Sáhib from a Tablet to Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl', published in *The Tabernacle of Unity* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2006 edition), p. 54. ↵
7. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in *Bahá'í Prayers: A Selection of Prayers Revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Wilmette: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991), pp. 30-31. ↵
8. Bahá'í International Community , 'Creating the World Anew: Leaving No One Behind', a statement to the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, (New York: 8 March 2019). ↵
9. Baha'i International Community, 'Rethinking Prosperity: Forging Alternatives to a Culture of Consumerism', a contribution to the 18th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (New York: 3 May 2010). ↵
10. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1990), p.39. ↵
11. *Paris Talks: Addresses Given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1911* (London: Bahá'í Publishing, 1972), p. 160. ↵
12. From a letter dated 20 July 2000 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Friends Gathered at the Youth Conference in Vancouver, 20–24 July 2000. ↵

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