

Ninth Principle — the Non-Interference of Religion...

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49

Ninth Principle — the Non-Interference of Religion with Politics

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In the conduct of life, man is actuated by two main motives: "The Hope for Reward" and "The Fear of Punishment."

This hope and this fear must consequently be greatly taken into account by those in authority who have important posts under Government. Their business in life is to consult together for the framing of laws, and to provide for their just administration.

The tent of the order of the world is raised and established on the two pillars of "Reward and Retribution."

In despotic Governments carried on by men without Divine faith, where no fear of spiritual retribution exists, the execution of the laws is tyrannical and unjust.

There is no greater prevention of oppression than these two sentiments, hope and fear. They have both political and spiritual consequences.

If administrators of the law would take into consideration [pg 158] the spiritual consequences of their decisions, and follow the guidance of religion, "They would be Divine agents in the world of action, the representatives of God for those who are on earth, and they would defend, for the love of God, the interests of His servants as they would defend their own." If a governor realizes his responsibility, and fears to defy the Divine Law, his judgments will be just. Above all, if he believes that the consequences of his actions will follow him beyond his earthly life, and that "as he sows so must he reap", such a man will surely avoid injustice and tyranny.



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Should an official, on the contrary, think that all responsibility for his actions must end with his earthly life, knowing and believing nothing of Divine favours and a spiritual kingdom of joy, he will lack the incentive to just dealing, and the inspiration to destroy oppression and unrighteousness.

When a ruler knows that his judgments will be weighed in a balance by the Divine Judge, and that if he be not found wanting he will come into the Celestial Kingdom and that the light of the Heavenly Bounty will shine upon him, then will he surely act with justice and equity. Behold how important it is that Ministers of State should be enlightened by religion!

With political questions the clergy, however, have nothing to do! Religious matters should not be confused with politics in the present state of the world (for their interests are not identical).

Religion concerns matters of the heart, of the spirit, and of morals.[pg 159]

Politics are occupied with the material things of life. Religious teachers should not invade the realm of politics; they should concern themselves with the spiritual education of the people; they should ever give good counsel to men, trying to serve God and human kind; they should endeavour to awaken spiritual aspiration, and strive to enlarge the understanding and knowledge of humanity, to improve morals, and to increase the love for justice.

This is in accordance with the Teaching of Bahá'u'lláh. In the Gospel also it is written, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's."

In Persia there are some amongst the important Ministers of State who are religious, who are exemplary, who worship God, and who fear to disobey His Laws, who judge justly and rule their people with Equity. Other Governors there are in this land who have no fear of God before their eyes, who think not of the consequences of their actions, working for their own desires, and these have brought Persia into great trouble and difficulty.

Oh, friends of God, be living examples of justice! So that by the Mercy of God, the world may see in your actions that you manifest the attributes of justice and mercy.

Justice is not limited, it is a universal quality. Its operation must be carried out in all classes, from the highest to the lowest. Justice must be sacred, and the rights of all the people must be considered. Desire for others only that which you desire for yourselves. Then[pg 160] shall we rejoice in the Sun of Justice, which shines from the Horizon of God.

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. Thus will you become torches of Divine justice, acting in accordance with the Teaching of Bahá'u'lláh, who, during His life, bore innumerable trials and persecutions in order to show forth to the world of mankind the virtues of the World of Divinity, making it possible for you to realize the supremacy of the spirit, and to rejoice in the Justice of God.

By His Mercy, the Divine Bounty will be showered upon you, and for this I pray!

