

IV. Extracts From the Talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi

Original English



Supplement

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— 145 —

Among these children many blessed souls will arise, if they be trained according to the Bahá'í Teachings. If a plant is carefully nurtured by a gardener, it will become good, and produce better fruit. These children must be given a good training from their earliest childhood. They must be given a systematic training which will further their development from day to day, in order that they may receive greater insight, so that their spiritual receptivity be broadened. Beginning in childhood they must receive instruction. They cannot be taught through books. Many elementary sciences must be made clear to them in the nursery; they must learn them in play, in amusement. Most ideas must be taught them through speech, not by book learning. One child must question the other concerning these things, and the other child must give the answer. In this way, they will make great progress. For example, mathematical problems must also be taught in the form of questions and answers. One of the children asks a question and the other must give the answer. Later on, the children will of their own accord speak with each other concerning these same subjects. The children who are at the head of the class must receive



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premiums. They must be encouraged and when any one of them shows good advancement, for the further development they must be praised and encouraged therein. Even so in Godlike affairs. Oral questions must be asked and the answers must be given orally. They must discuss with each other in this manner.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'The Bahá'í World', Vol. 9 1940-1944, p. 543

— 146 —

Educate the children in their infancy in such a way that they may become exceedingly kind and merciful to the animals. If the animal is sick they should endeavour to cure it; if it is hungry they should feed it; if it is thirsty, they should satisfy its thirst; if it is tired they should give it rest.

Man is generally sinful and the animal is innocent; unquestionably one must be more kind and merciful to the innocent. The harmful animals, such as the bloodthirsty wolf, the poisonous snake and other [pg 311] injurious animals are excepted, because mercy towards these is cruelty to man, and other animals.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'The Bahá'í World', Vol. 9, p. 544

— 147 —

The art of music is divine and effective. It is the food of the soul and spirit. Through the power and charm of music the spirit of man is uplifted. It has wonderful sway and effect in the hearts of children, for their hearts are pure and melodies have great influence in them. The latent talents with which the hearts of these children are endowed will find expression through the medium of music. Therefore, you must exert yourselves to make them proficient; teach them to sing with excellence and effect. It is incumbent upon each child to know something of music, for without knowledge of this art the melodies of instrument and voice cannot be rightly enjoyed. Likewise, it is necessary that the schools teach it in order that the souls and hearts of the pupils may become vivified and exhilarated and their lives be brightened with enjoyment.

Today illumined and spiritual children are gathered in this meeting. They are the children of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of heaven is for such souls as these, for they are near to God. They have pure hearts. They have spiritual faces. The effect of the divine teachings is manifest in the perfect purity of their hearts. That is why Christ has addressed the world, saying, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" — that is, men must become pure in heart to know God. The teachings have had great effect. Spiritual souls! Tender souls! The hearts of all children are of the utmost purity. They are mirrors upon which no dust has fallen. But this purity is on account of weakness and innocence, not on account of any strength and testing, for as this is the early period of their childhood, their hearts and minds are unsullied by the world. They cannot display any great intelligence. They have neither hypocrisy nor deceit. This is on account of the child's weakness, whereas the man becomes pure through his strength. Through the power of intelligence he becomes simple; through the great power of reason and understanding and not through the power of weakness he becomes sincere. When he attains to the state of perfection, he will receive these qualities; his heart becomes purified, his spirit enlightened, his soul is sensitized and tender — all through his great strength. This is the difference between the perfect man and the child. Both have the[pg 312] underlying qualities of simplicity and sincerity — the child through the power of weakness and the man through the power of strength.

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I give you my advice, and it is this: Train these children with divine exhortations. From their childhood instill in their hearts the love of God so they may manifest in their lives the fear of God and have confidence in the bestowals of God. Teach them to free themselves from human imperfections and to acquire the divine perfections latent in the heart of man. The life of man is useful if he attains the perfections of man. If he becomes the center of the imperfections of the world of humanity, death is better than life, and nonexistence better than existence. Therefore, make ye an effort in order that these children may be rightly trained and educated and that each of them may attain perfection in the world of humanity. Know ye the value of these children for they are all my children.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘The Promulgation of Universal Peace’, p. 52

— 148 —

If a pupil is told that his intelligence is less than his fellow pupils, it is a very great drawback and handicap to his progress. He must be encouraged to advance...

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘The Promulgation of Universal Peace’, p. 76

— 149 —

...According to the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh the family, being a human unit, must be educated according to the rules of sanctity. All the virtues must be taught the family. The integrity of the family bond must be constantly considered, and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed. The rights of the son, the father, the mother — none of them must be transgressed, none of them must be arbitrary. Just as the son has certain obligations to his father, the father, likewise, has certain obligations to his son. The mother, the sister and other members of the household have certain prerogatives. All these rights and prerogatives must be conserved, yet the unity of the family must be sustained. The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honor of one, the honor [pg 313] of all.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘The Promulgation of Universal Peace’, p. 168

— 150 —

He promulgated the adoption of the same course of education for man and woman. Daughters and sons must follow the same curriculum of study, thereby promoting unity of the sexes. When all mankind shall receive the same opportunity of education and the equality of men and women be realized, the foundations of war will be utterly destroyed. Without equality this will be impossible because all differences and distinction are conducive to discord and strife. Equality between men and women is conducive to the abolition of warfare for the reason that women will never be willing to sanction it. Mothers will not give their sons as sacrifices upon the battlefield after twenty years of anxiety and loving devotion in rearing them from infancy, no

matter what cause they are called upon to defend. There is no doubt that when women obtain equality of rights, war will entirely cease among mankind.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'The Promulgation of Universal Peace', p. 175

— 151 —

The child must not be oppressed or censured because it is undeveloped; it must be patiently trained...

'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'The Promulgation of Universal Peace', p. 180

— 152 —

Bahá'u'lláh has announced that inasmuch as ignorance and lack of education are barriers of separation among mankind, all must receive training and instruction. Through this provision the lack of mutual understanding will be remedied and the unity of mankind furthered and advanced. Universal education is a universal law...

'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'The Promulgation of Universal Peace', p. 300

— 153 —

The education of each child is compulsory.... In addition to this wide-spread education each child must be taught a profession, art, or trade, so that every member of the community will be enabled to earn his own livelihood. Work done in the spirit of service is the highest form of worship...

'Abdu'l-Bahá, "Abdu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy", p. 83

