

Bahá'í Sacred Writings, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, #270

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated by Committee



It is clear and evident that the innate nature and reality of all things is capable of manifesting two kinds of perfections. One is innate perfections, which require no intermediary and are purely the creation of God. The other is acquired perfections, which are attained through the training of a true educator.

Consider the outward realities: The trees, flowers, and fruits manifest, on the one hand, an innate grace and vitality which is purely a divine bestowal, and, on the other, an ineffable sweetness and beauty which proceedeth from the tender care of the gardener. For left to themselves they would become an untamed thicket; fail to bear their abundance of blossoms, flowers, and fruits; and be fit only for the fire. Once they are brought under the tender care and attention of the cultivator, however, they are transformed into gardens, bowers, and orchards; bring forth flowers and fruits; and adorn the face of the earth with blossoms and sweet herbs.

The same holdeth true of human society: Were people to be left to their own devices they would become even as the creeping things of the earth and be numbered with the beasts of the field. They would learn the ways of ferocity, cruelty, and bloodthirstiness, and be consumed with the fire of remoteness and rebellion.

All humanity are pupils in the school of the world and are afflicted and enfeebled by chronic ills. Those sanctified Beings, the Messengers and Chosen Ones of God, are the Instructors of the assemblage of the All-Merciful and the Physicians of the dispensary of the All-Glorious. They are the Heralds of His providence and the Luminaries of the firmament of His guidance. They appear so that the flame of inward and outward perfections that lieth dormant within the lamp of the human reality may be ignited through that fire which the hand of God hath kindled, and that the chronic ills that afflict humankind may be eradicated through the bounty of the divine grace and the bestowals of a Christ-like Spirit.

It followeth from this clear argument that human society requireth the care and training of a true Educator and that human souls stand in need of a power that can regulate, bind, restrain, deter, encourage, impel, and attract them. For unless the garden of creation be tended by a loving gardener, sustained by the manifold grace of the one true God, and administered by the just policies of the government, it will never acquire vitality and grace, nor will it prosper and flourish.

This power to deter and restrain, to govern and regulate, to lead and impel is of two kinds. The first agency of protection and deterrence is political power, which pertaineth to the physical world. It ensureth the material well-being of humanity; preserveth the life, property, and honour of all; and is the source of the greatness and virtue of this noble race. The centre of the operation



TRANSLATION



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of this political power and the pivot of the circle of this divine bounty are the just sovereigns, faithful trustees, wise ministers, and courageous commanders.

The other educator and regulator of the world of humanity is the sanctified power of the spirit, the divinely revealed Scriptures, the Prophets of God, the heavenly souls, and the divinely learned. For these repositories of God's revelation and daysprings of His inspiration educate the hearts and souls of humanity, rectify their characters, refine their conduct, and inspire the righteous among them. That is, these sanctified beings, even as a force born of the spirit, deliver the souls of men from the evils of a corrupt character, the darkness of reprehensible attributes, and the defilement of the realm of existence, and thus illumine them with the light of human virtues, divine attributes, and heavenly characteristics and qualities, so that the shining truth of the words "Hallowed be the Lord, the most excellent of all creators" and the full glory of the utterance "We created man in the most excellent of forms" may be realized within the sacred reality of man. It is through the liberal effusions of the grace of these daysprings of the signs and verses of God that pure and subtle human realities become the focal centre of the blessings of the All-Merciful.