

**EXPANDED OUTLINE OF
'ABDU'L-BAHA'S BOOK
THE SECRET OF DIVINE CIVILIZATION
Developed by Roger Coe**

INTRODUCTION - THE STATION AND CAPACITIES OF MAN THROUGH THE ENDOWMENT OF MIND. WISDOM & INTELLECT THE TWO MOST LUMINOUS LIGHTS IN EITHER WORLD.

I. CALL TO THE PERSIAN PEOPLE TO AWAKEN TO THE PRESENT NEED; INDICATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REASONS FOR NOT INITIATING THE NEEDED REFORMS.

- 5 Praise to the Shah for resolving to institute reforms in the country
- 6 Reasons for why the book was written anonymously;
 Calls the Persians to look at their glorious past
- 7 On Persia's philosophers, sciences, intellect & perceptiveness
- 8 Call to the people to awaken, reasons for their present failure
- 9 Native innate capacities of the Persians have always excelled others
- 10 Europe birthed by the Arabians
- 11 Indicates that the reasons why people will oppose the reforms is because of their own self-interests; Uses the phrase, "translation of potentiality into actuality" here.

- 12 ENUMERATION OF THE OPPOSITION'S OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSED REFORMS:
 - (1) Foreign "isms" are unrelated to Persia's needs & customs
 - (2) Practices of heathens are contrary to canons of true faith
 - (3) Need for great deliberation
 - (4) Persians should develop themselves without borrowing from others

II. ANSWER TO THE FIRST OBJECTION.

- 13 Asks what harm can come from application of proven reforms by which other countries were uplifted
- 14 Need to draw analogies from circumstances and collective experience and determine the future
- 16 Necessity for educated and spiritual population and leaders;
 Proposed changes now in the hands of consultative assemblies
- 17 Necessary qualifications for members of consultative bodies
- 18 Negative attributes of consultants;
 Lack of religious faith and education is the cause of oppression
- 19 Excellent poster quote - man's supreme honor is in high resolves & noble purposes
- 20 Ranking of positions in creation: First is the Prophets; Second are the just Kings; Third are the wise Ministers of state

- 21 Fourth are the famed and accomplished men of learning who apply the science of government, work day & night, research in the sciences, & educate students of capacity
- 22 Fifth are sagacious leaders and influential personalities
- 23 Need for establishing consultative bodies
Beautiful poster quotation
- 24 Uses for wealth

III. ANSWER TO THE SECOND OBJECTION.

- 25 Counters argument of those who say adopted reforms are against the Book of God as, "he who imitates a people is one of them."
- 30 We even borrow from the animals
- 31 Indicates the importance of studying the science of logic as inherited from the Greek logicians - (Algebra defined as restoration & equation.)
- 32 Spiritually learned know that reforms are needed and desirable
He intimates that it's desirable that there be more spiritually learned individuals.
- 33 "Are they equal, those who know and those who don't know?" Qur'an 39:12 -
The spiritually learned are lamps of guidance. "For everything God has created a sign and symbol, and established standards and tests by which it may be known." Test of the spiritually learned is their perfection.
- 34 TRADITION ON THE DUTIES OF THE SPIRITUALLY LEARNED:
 - 1. GUARD HIMSELF;
 - 2. DEFEND HIS FAITH;
 - 3. OPPOSE HIS PASSIONS; and
 - 4. OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS OF HIS LORD.

"Since these illustrious and holy words embody all the conditions of learning a commentary on their meaning is appropriate"

A. ON GUARDING ONESELF.

- 35 Guarding oneself means acquiring the attributes of spiritual & material perfection. The first attribute of perfection is learning and the cultural attainments of the mind; the goal is COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE
- 37 The legislature must be composed of the learned; Speaks of the need for multi-disciplinary groups of scholars to bring equilibrium & order.
- 39 The second attribute of perfection - justice and impartiality
The third attribute of perfection - educate the masses in various branches of learning and useful sciences
- 40 Other attributes of perfection - fear God, love His servants, exercise mildness and calm, to be trustworthy, to strive & struggle, et al.

B. ON DEFENDING YOUR FAITH.

- 41 The second standard for the spiritually learned - Defend your faith by raising up the Word of God, increasing the number of believers, & promoting the Faith to make it victorious over others.
- 42 On the correctness of Luther's position in protesting accretional ordinances.
- 43 On why teaching by the sword does not apply to these times.
- 46 Faith should be propagated through human perfections and spiritual behavior. Story of Nu'man the idolatrous king who was won over to the Christian faith by Hanzala's spiritual behavior.
- 52 Continuation of the discourse on the proper approach to teaching the faith
- 53 Failure in teaching comes from fanaticism and unreasoning religious zeal.
- 55 Attributes of the people of faith: justice, fair-mindedness, candor, loyalty, trustworthiness, love, determination, humanity, etc.
- 57 On the unworthy divines and their negative effect on the masses.

C. ON OPPOSING YOUR PASSIONS.

- 59 The third standard of the spiritually learned: Opposes his passions - the balance wheel to keep man's good qualities in equilibrium; on the destructive effects of desire and excess.
- 60 The center of emanation for good character is reason and knowledge. Necessity for a culture to be supported by a cultivated morality.
- 61 On what happens to a culture which doesn't have a moral center. Discourse on arms, war, power, and the need for disarmament.
- 64 The heart's passions wrap the eyes in a thousand veils. True civilization dependent on the establishment of Universal Peace.
- 66 Endeavor, ceaseless endeavor, is needed by people working for Universal Peace.
- 68 Anushirvan the Generous and the Just - reorganized the powers of the state by righteousness and justice.
- 70 Wisdom and justice - the two mighty banners of any king. There are times when justice and righteousness demand war.

D. ON OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

- 71 4th phrase - obedient to the commandments of his Lord - The necessity of divine teachings from the Prophets; religion is the light of the world.
POWERFUL STATEMENTS ON THE SUPREME INFLUENCE OF RELIGION.
- 72 Don't measure the Divine Words by hypocritical followers. Voltaire did this.
- 73 The Word is a healing to the faithful and the ruin of the wicked. On the use of allegory. Religion as the only means for establishing true unity. Nothing can be effected without unity and agreement and religion is the perfect means to establish unity.
- 75 Illustration of Progressive Revelation from Moses to Muhammad. Religion is the very basis and root-principle of culture & civilization

- 77 Socrates learned the oneness of God from Solomon's disciples.
- 80 Religion as the promoter of learning and advancement.
- 83 No principle mightier in every sense than religion; Galen said the Christians acquired the qualities of true philosophers though they were uneducated.
- 87 On the influence of the Arabs on European civilization and progress.
- 91 Returning to the theme: Rise up and struggle; seek education, seek enlightenment
- 92 Influence of the Arabs on Europe
Find John William Draper's book: The Intellectual Development of Europe or The Progress of Peoples
- 94 On the importance and necessity of religion; religion as the source of spiritual and material perfections; all the laws of politics are contained in the Holy Books.
- 96 Nothing of value has come to man but that it was first set forth directly or implicitly in the Holy Scriptures. Sincerity is the foundation-stone of faith.
- 97 Sense of human dignity comes from the Prophets - it is not innate.
- 98 Religion - to sum up - produces all human virtues.
- 99 But it must be administered by a wise and skilled physician.
- 100 Summary: which reform is contrary to the Divine commandments?
- 103 Necessity to serve the common good; when a claim is advanced ask yourself what the speaker's real motive is.
- 105 On the necessity to re-organize the academic curriculum and the methods of studying the various branches of knowledge. VERY IMPORTANT!

IV. ANSWER TO THE THIRD OBJECTION.

- 107 Study these proposed changes and act - On administration
- 109 Publication of high thoughts is the dynamic power in the arteries of life.
- 111 Necessity for education of the masses as this will stir the nerves & arteries of the people and give them the determination & will to struggle.

V. ANSWER TO THE FOURTH OBJECTION.

- 114 The use of history - the past as a tried model

CLOSING