



Blessings in Teaching Children

A Compilation from the Babá'i Sacred Writings

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I

Blessed is that teacher who remaineth faithful to the Covenant of God, and occupieth himself with the education of children. For him hath the Supreme Pen inscribed that reward which is revealed in the Most Holy Book. Blessed, blessed is he!

– Bahá'u'llah, Baha'i Education, p. 7

II

Blessed is that teacher who shall arise to instruct the children, and to guide the people into the pathways of God, the Bestower, the Well-Beloved.

– Baha'u'llah, Baha'i Education, p. 7

III

O ye loving mothers, know ye that in God's sight, the best of all ways to worship Him is to educate the children and train them in all the perfections of humankind; and no nobler deed than this can be imagined.

– 'Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha, p. 139

IV

O handmaid of God! ... To the mothers must be given the divine Teachings and effective counsel, and they must be encouraged and made eager to train their children, for the mother is the first educator of the child. It is she who must, at the very beginning, suckle the newborn at the breast of God's Faith and God's Law, that divine love may enter into him even with his mother's milk, and be with him till his final breath.

So long as the mother faileth to train her children, and start them on a proper way of life, the training which they receive later on will not take its full effect. It is incumbent upon the Spiritual Assemblies to provide the mothers with a well-planned programme for the education of children, showing how, from infancy, the child must be watched over and taught. These instructions must be given to

every mother to serve her as a guide, so that each will train and nurture her children in accordance with the Teachings.

– ‘Abdu’l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Baha, p. 138

V

Work ye for the guidance of the women in that land, teach the young girls and the children, so that the mothers may educate their little ones from their earliest days, thoroughly train them, rear them to have a goodly character and good morals, guide them to all the virtues of humankind, prevent the development of any behaviour that would be worthy of blame, and foster them in the embrace of Baha’i education. Thus shall these tender infants be nurtured at the breast of the knowledge of God and His love. Thus shall they grow and flourish, and be taught righteousness and the dignity of humankind, resolution and the will to strive and to endure. Thus shall they learn perseverance in all things, the will to advance, high mindedness and high resolve, chastity and purity of life. Thus shall they be enabled to carry to a successful conclusion whatsoever they undertake.

Let the mothers consider that whatever concerneth the education of children is of the first importance. Let them put forth every effort in this regard, for when the bough is green and tender it will grow in whatever way ye train it. Therefore is it incumbent upon the mothers to rear their little ones even as a gardener tendeth his young plants. Let them strive by day and by night to establish within their children faith and certitude, the fear of God, the love of the Beloved of the worlds, and all good qualities and traits. Whensoever a mother seeth that her child hath done well, let her praise and applaud him and cheer his heart; and if the slightest undesirable trait should manifest itself, let her counsel the child and punish him, and use means based on reason, even a slight verbal chastisement should this be necessary. It is not, however, permissible to strike a child, or vilify him, for the child’s character will be totally perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse.

–‘Abdu’l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Baha, pp. 124-125

VI

O handmaids of the Merciful! Render ye thanks unto the Ancient Beauty that ye have been raised up and gathered together in this mightiest of centuries, this most illumined of ages. As befitting thanks for such a bounty, stand ye staunch and strong in the Covenant and, following the precepts of God and the holy Law, suckle your children from their infancy with the milk of a universal education, and rear them so that from their earliest days, within their inmost heart, their very nature, a way of life will be firmly established that will conform to the divine Teachings in all things.

For mothers are the first educators, the first mentors; and truly it is the mothers who determine the happiness, the future greatness, the courteous ways and learning and judgement, the understanding and the faith of their little ones.

—‘Abdu’l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Baha, pp. 125-126

VII

Were there no educator, all souls would remain savage, and were it not for the teacher, the children would be ignorant creatures.

It is for this reason that, in this new cycle, education and training are recorded in the Book of God as obligatory and not voluntary. That is, it is enjoined upon the father and mother, as a duty, to strive with all effort to train the daughter and the son, to nurse them from the breast of knowledge and to rear them in the bosom of sciences and arts. Should they neglect this matter, they shall be held responsible and worthy of reproach in the presence of the stern Lord.

—‘Abdu’l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Baha, pp. 126-127

VIII

O ye who have peace of soul! Among the divine Texts as set forth in the Most Holy Book and also in other Tablets is this: it is incumbent upon the father and mother to train their children both in good conduct and the study of books; study, that is, to the degree required, so that no child, whether girl or boy, will remain illiterate. Should the father fail in his duty he must be compelled to discharge his responsibility, and should he be unable to comply, let the House of

Justice take over the education of the children; in no case is a child to be left without an education. This is one of the stringent and inescapable commandments to neglect which would draw down the wrathful indignation of Almighty God.

– ‘Abdu’l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Baha, pp. 127-128

IX

O steadfast in the Covenant! . Praise thou God that thou hast succeeded in becoming a teacher of young Baha’is, young trees of the Abha Paradise, and at the same time art able to benefit the other children as well.

According to the explicit divine Text, teaching the children is indispensable and obligatory. It followeth that teachers are servants of the Lord God, since they have arisen to perform this task, which is the same as worship. You must therefore offer praise with every breath, for you are educating your spiritual children.

The spiritual father is greater than the physical one, for the latter bestoweth but this world’s life, whereas the former endoweth his child with life everlasting. This is why, in the Law of God, teachers are listed among the heirs.

Now you in reality have acquired all these spiritual children free and gratis, and that is better than having physical children; for such children are not grateful to their fathers, since they feel that the father serveth them because he must-and therefore no matter what he doeth for them, they pay it no mind. Spiritual children, however, are always appreciative of their father’s loving kindness. This verily is out of the grace of thy Lord, the Beneficent.

– ‘Abdu’l-Baha, Baha’i Education, p. 25

X

O servant of the Blessed Beauty!

Blessed art thou, since thou art engaged in rendering a service which will make thy face to shine in the Abha Kingdom, and that is the education and training of children. If one should, in the right way, teach and train the children, he will be performing a service than which none is greater at the Sacred Threshold.

According to what we have heard, you are succeeding in this. You must, however, struggle unceasingly to perfect yourself and win ever higher achievements.

At all times, I implore Almighty God to make you the means of illuminating the minds of those children, of bringing their hearts to life and sanctifying their souls.

–‘Abdu’l-Baha, Baha’i Education, p. 24

XI

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! Thou hast exerted strenuous efforts for the education of children and I have been, and am, infinitely pleased with thee. Praise God, thou hast been enabled to serve in this field, and it is certain that the confirmations of the Abha Kingdom will encompass thee, and thou shalt achieve prosperity and success.

Today the training and education of the believers’ children is the pre-eminent goal of the chosen. It is the same as servitude to the Sacred Threshold and waiting upon the Blessed Beauty. Joyously, therefore, canst thou pride thyself on this.

–‘Abdu’l-Baha, Baha’i Education, pp. 25-26

XII

One of the most important of undertakings is the education of children, for success and prosperity depend upon service to and worship of God, the Holy, the All-Glorified.

Among the greatest of all great services is the education of children . Praised be God, ye are now exerting strenuous efforts toward this end. The more ye persevere in this most important task, the more will ye witness the confirmations of God, to such a degree that ye yourselves will be astonished.

This verily is a matter beyond all doubt, a pledge that shall certainly be redeemed.

– ‘Abdu’l-Baha, Baha’i Education, p. 27

XIII

O thou teacher of the children of the kingdom!

Thou hast arisen to perform a service which would justly entitle thee to vaunt thyself over all the teachers on earth. For the teachers of this world make use of human education to develop the powers, whether spiritual or material, of humankind, whilst thou art training these young plants in the gardens of God according to the education of Heaven, and art giving them the lessons of the Kingdom.

The result of this kind of teaching will be that it will attract the blessings of God, and make manifest the perfections of man.

Hold thou fast to this kind of teaching, for the fruits of it will be very great. The children must, from their infancy, be raised to be spiritual and godly Baha'is. If such be their training, they will remain safe from every test.

—'Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i Education*, p. 26

XIV

Among the greatest of all services that can possibly be rendered by man to Almighty God is the education and training of children, young plants of the Abha Paradise, so that these children, fostered by grace in the way of salvation, growing like pearls of divine bounty in the shell of education, will one day bejewel the crown of abiding glory.

It is, however, very difficult to undertake this service, even harder to succeed in it. I hope that thou wilt acquit thyself well in this most important of tasks, and successfully carry the day, and become an ensign of God's abounding grace; that these children, reared one and all in the holy Teachings, will develop natures like unto the sweet airs that blow across the gardens of the All-Glorious, and will waft their fragrance around the world.

—'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha*, pp. 133-134

XV

O thou spiritual teacher! . Be thou a teacher of love, in a school of unity. Train thou the children of the friends of the Merciful in the rules and ways of His loving-kindness. Tend the young trees of the Abha Paradise with the welling waters of His grace and peace and joy. Make them to flourish under the downpour of His bounty. Strive with all thy powers that the children may stand out and grow fresh, delicate, and sweet, like the ideal trees in the gardens of Heaven.

All these gifts and bounties depend upon love for the Beauty of the All-Glorious, and on the blessings in the teachings of the Most High, and the spiritual instructions of the Supreme Concourse, and on ecstasy and ardour and diligent pursuit of whatsoever will redound to the eternal honour of the community of man.

—‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Baha’i Education*, pp. 24-25

XVI

O ye two well-loved handmaids of God! Whatever a man’s tongue speaketh, that let him prove by his deeds. If he claimeth to be a believer, then let him act in accordance with the precepts of the Abha Kingdom.

Praised be God, ye two have demonstrated the truth of your words by your deeds, and have won the confirmations of the Lord God. Every day at first light, ye gather the Baha’i children together and teach them the communions and prayers. This is a most praiseworthy act, and bringeth joy to the children’s hearts: that they should, at every morn, turn their faces toward the Kingdom and make mention of the Lord and praise His Name, and in the sweetest of voices, chant and recite.

These children are even as young plants, and teaching them the prayers is as letting the rain pour down upon them, that they may wax tender and fresh, and the soft breezes of the love of God may blow over them, making them to tremble with joy.

Blessedness awaiteth you, and a fair haven.

—‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Baha*, p. 139

XVII

The education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favour of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence and alloweth man to work his way to the heights of abiding glory. If a child be trained from his infancy, he will, through the loving care of the Holy Gardener, drink in the crystal waters of the spirit and of knowledge, like a young tree amid the rilling brooks. And certainly he will gather to himself the bright rays of the Sun of Truth, and through its light and heat will grow ever fresh and fair in the garden of life.

Therefore must the mentor be a doctor as well: that is, he must, in instructing the child, remedy its faults; must give him learning, and at the same time rear him to have a spiritual nature. Let the teacher be a doctor to the character of the child, thus will he heal the spiritual ailments of the children of men.

If, in this momentous task, a mighty effort be exerted, the world of humanity will shine out with other adornings, and shed the fairest light. Then will this darksome place grow luminous, and this abode of earth turn into Heaven. The very demons will change to angels then, and wolves to shepherds of the flock, and the wild-dog pack to gazelles that pasture on the plains of oneness, and ravening beasts to peaceful herds; and birds of prey, with talons sharp as knives, to songsters warbling their sweet native notes. .

Every child is potentially the light of the world-and at the same time its darkness; wherefore must the question of education be accounted as of primary importance. From his infancy, the child must be nursed at the breast of God's love, and nurtured in the embrace of His knowledge, that he may radiate light, grow in spirituality, be filled with wisdom and learning, and take on the characteristics of the angelic host.

Since ye have been assigned to this holy task, ye must therefore exert every effort to make that school famed in all respects throughout the world; to make it the cause of exalting the Word of the Lord.

-‘Abdu’l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Baha, pp. 129-31

XVIII

Establish schools that are well organized, and promote the fundamentals of instruction in the various branches of knowledge through teachers who are pure and sanctified, distinguished for their high standards of conduct and general excellence, and strong in faith; educators with a thorough knowledge of sciences and arts.

—'Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i Education*, p. 25

XIX

There are certain pillars which have been established as the unshakeable supports of the Faith of God. The mightiest of these is learning and the use of the mind, the expansion of consciousness, and insight into the realities of the universe and the hidden mysteries of Almighty God.

To promote knowledge is thus an inescapable duty imposed on every one of the friends of God. It is incumbent upon that Spiritual Assembly, that assemblage of God, to exert every effort to educate the children, so that from infancy they will be trained in Baha'i conduct and the ways of God, and will, even as young plants, thrive and flourish in the soft-flowing waters that are the counsels and admonitions of the Blessed Beauty.

—'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha*, p. 126