

Professions

by Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá

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Artists and Painters

The Sun of Truth is the Word of God upon which dependeth the education of those who are endowed with the power of understanding and of utterance. It is the true spirit and the heavenly water, through whose aid and gracious providence all things have been and will be quickened. Its appearance in every mirror is conditioned by the colour of that mirror. For instance, when its light is cast upon the mirrors of the hearts of the wise, it bringeth forth wisdom. In like manner when it manifesteth itself in the mirrors of the hearts of craftsmen, it unfoldeth new and unique arts, and when reflected in the hearts of those that apprehend the truth it revealeth wondrous tokens of true knowledge and discloseth the verities of God's utterance.

(Extract from an untranslated Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh)

I rejoice to hear that thou takest pains with thine art, for in this wonderful new age, art is worship. The more thou strivest to perfect it, the closer wilt thou come to God. What bestowal could be greater than this, that one's art should be even as the act of worshipping the Lord? That is to say, when thy fingers grasp the paint brush, it is as if thou wert at prayer in the Temple.

(Extract from an untranslated Tablet by 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

Craftsmen

The fifth Taráz concerneth the protection and preservation of the stations of God's servants. One should not ignore the truth of any matter, rather should one give expression to that which is right and true. The people of Bahá'í should not deny any soul the reward due to him, should treat craftsmen with deference, and, unlike the people aforetime, should not defile their tongues with abuse.

In this Day the sun of craftsmanship shineth above the horizon of the occident and the river of arts is flowing out of the sea of that region. One must speak with fairness and appreciate such bounty. By the life of God! The world "Equity" shineth bright and resplendent even as the sun. We pray God to graciously shed its radiance upon everyone. He is in truth powerful over all things, He Who is wont to answer the prayers of all men.

From Tarázát, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, pp 38-39)

O thou servant of the One true God! In this universal dispensation man's wondrous craftsmanship is reckoned as worship of the Resplendent Beauty. Consider what a bounty and blessing it is that

craftsmanship is regarded as worship. In former times, it was believed that such skills were tantamount to ignorance, if not a misfortune, hindering man from drawing nigh unto God. Now consider how His infinite bestowals and abundant favours have changed hell-fire into blissful paradise, and a heap of dark dust into a luminous garden.

It behoveth the craftsmen of the world at each moment to offer a thousand tokens of gratitude at the Sacred Threshold, and to exert their highest endeavour and diligently pursue their professions so that their efforts may produce that which will manifest the greatest beauty and perfection before the eyes of all men.

(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 145)

Doctors

Well is it with the physician who cureth ailments in My hallowed and dearly-cherished Name.

(Extract from an untranslated Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh)

O thou sincere servant of the True One and spiritual physician of the people! Whenever thou attendest a patient, turn thy face toward the Lord of the Kingdom, supplicate assistance from the Holy Spirit and heal the ailments of the sick one...

(From a Tablet by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to an individual believer)

Merchants

Commerce is as a heaven, whose sun is trustworthiness and whose moon is truthfulness.

(Extract from an untranslated Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh)

The friends of God should, through the instrumentality of their business, lead the people to God's path, and make them so astonished as to exclaim: "How great is their truthfulness, how high their trustworthiness, and how true their good-will."

(Extract from an untranslated Tablet by 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

Musicians

We have made it lawful for you to listen to music and singing. Take heed, however, lest listening thereto should cause you to overstep the bounds of propriety and dignity. Let your joy be the joy born of My Most Great Name, a Name that bringeth rapture to the heart, and filleth with ecstasy the minds of all who have drawn nigh unto God. We, verily, have made music as a ladder for your souls, a means whereby they may be lifted up unto the realm on high; make it not, therefore, as wings to self and passion. Truly, We are loath to see you numbered with the foolish.¹

(Bahá'u'lláh, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, par. 51)

The art of music must be brought to the highest stage of development, for this is one of the most wonderful arts and in this glorious age of the Lord of Unity it is highly essential to gain its mastery. However, one must endeavor to attain the degree of artistic perfection and not be like those who leave matters unfinished.

(Extract from an untranslated Tablet by 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

Rulers

The Great Being saith: The heaven of statesmanship is made luminous and resplendent by the brightness of the light of these blessed words which hath dawned from the dayspring of the Will of God: It behoveth every ruler to weigh his own being every day in the balance of equity and justice and then to judge between men and counsel them to do that which would direct their steps unto the path of wisdom

¹ A newer translation of this passage has been substituted for the translation originally included.

and understanding. This is the cornerstone of statesmanship and the essence thereof. From these words every enlightened man of wisdom will readily perceive that which will foster such aims as the welfare, security and protection of mankind and the safety of human lives. Were men of insight to quaff their fill from the ocean of inner meanings which lie enshrined in these words and become acquainted therewith, they would bear witness to the sublimity and the excellence of this utterance. If this lowly one were to set forth that which he perceiveth, all would testify unto God's consummate wisdom. The secrets of statesmanship and that of which the people are in need lie enfolded within these words. This lowly servant earnestly entreateth the One true God - exalted be His glory - to illumine the eyes of the people of the world with the splendour of the light of wisdom that they, one and all, may recognize that which is indispensable in this day.

That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith: Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth. In another passage He hath proclaimed: It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.

(From Lawh-i-Maqsúd, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, pp 166-167)

Teachers

Man is the supreme Talisman. Lack of a proper education hath, however, deprived him of that which he doth inherently possess. Through a word proceeding out of the mouth of God he was called into being; by one word more he was guided to recognize the Source of his education; by yet another word his station and destiny were safeguarded. The Great Being saith: Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.

(From Lawh-i-Maqsúd, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, pp 161-162)

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.

(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pp. 129-130)