

MORAL EDUCATION

TRANSCRIBED TALK OF DR. FARZAM ARBAB

On passing through this life – our empty life, we face the fact that our soul in its eternal journey towards God has a certain or relatively short amount of time in this world and has to do a great deal with the development of spiritual qualities and the acquisition of its spirituality. We know that from the very beautiful and profound analogy that Abdul-Bahá, Son of Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder Prophet of the Baha'i Faith has presented us that in fact as in the womb of the mother a child develops certain attributes, develops those faculties that he or she needs in this world, develops eyes to see which obviously he does not need in the womb, develops his ears, develops his teeth, develops his legs and feet to walk on, in the same way, in this world, we develop the faculties that we need to function with in the next world. These faculties are such faculties as spiritual eyes, spiritual ears, spiritual understanding and basically the whole category of things that we call spiritual qualities. The same way as we needed certain physical faculties and mental faculties here, we need love, trustworthiness, honesty, compassion, generosity. All these different qualities that basically finally define the soul. It is with those qualities that our soul after death continues on its eternal journey. We understand that very well and always in our minds, we associate moral education or moral behaviour with those qualities, with those virtues.

We need to think more about the very fact that the journey of our soul starts on

this plane. I think, it is very useful to ask ourselves “why did it have to start here ?” The answers are many and certainly we can pass on our wisdom in our reasons for creation. But one conclusion that we immediately reach is that somehow the interactions of this world, the relationships that are established in this world, the sufferings, the tests, the trials, the joy, the motions, the stillness, all these different attributes and all these different things that have to do with our stay in this world are necessary, and are essential for the acquisition of these spiritual qualities. Obviously, if we have to start life here, this is the place that we have to develop our spiritual qualities. Somehow this is the place, in spite of the fact that we have to transcend it, be detached from it, overcome it, we have to do something here. Which means that the development of our spiritual qualities cannot be considered as something purely internal to each one of us. We are not each an isolated island. We cannot just say that the purpose of my life is to know God, is to develop my qualities and I am going to do that by myself, by just praying, by meditating and by doing many things that are correct and which we should do. But somehow those things cannot be all because if they were, there would have been no need for us to come into this world in order to be able to develop these spiritual faculties that we need in our journey towards God. So this world and the society that we create is an essential part of the spiritual development of each one of us.

We, ourselves as Baha'is often forget, how much our activities in society, how much our contribution to building a society is an essential aspect of our own spiritual development. We also talk of the many religious traditions that think that everything else is not essential and my spiritual destiny and my relation with God and my spiritual qualities that

I acquire are all that matter. As if somehow we could separate that from the environment, from the society in which we live. Society then is the context within which we develop our spiritual qualities even though our spiritual qualities are very personal things between us and God. That is the first point that I wanted to make.

Now, the second point merits meditation on our part. There is a unique characteristic or attribute of our interaction with society with this environment within which we grow and develop which doesn't exist, for example in the analogy of the womb. As we grow in society one of our essential characteristics is to change the environment within which we are growing. The environment doesn't just stay there constant for us to grow in. Spiritual growth of each one of us individually means that we are supposed to change that environment and improve it, the social environment. Now what that really says is that two types of progress or time, if you wish, are set up. Two types of movement are set up. One is the movement of each one of our souls towards God in time, and the other one is the movement of entire humanity so that each time because of what we have done on that environment, that environment becomes a better place for the spiritual growth of the next generation of souls that come to it. So somehow although our individual soul's journey to God mostly occurs not in this world yet it is connected intimately with what we call an ever-advancing civilization which is a phenomenon of this world and it's movement in time is concerned with generations and not just with that same soul. Each soul comes into it and leaves it. So there are two types of continuity we are talking about. A continuity of life of our own, and the historical continuity for the entire human race. Those two things are not separate from each other. That is why we say that the purpose of our life is to know and to worship God. That means my soul. And sometimes we say we

have been created to carry on an ever-advancing civilization and usually we don't connect those two things together in our minds. But they are very much connected – these two movements in time. These two types of progress. What does that mean ? That means then that the development of my spiritual qualities, my personal progress cannot be separated from the advancement of civilization. They are connected. That means that we can't talk about moral education, the way the past religions have. We cannot talk about morality just in terms of certain things that each one of us has for ourselves. There is a social context, there is a question of the building of civilization which is related to the acquisition of the spiritual qualities we need. If we think this way then it becomes very clear that moral education and questions of morality in general cannot be examined in isolation from the forces that shape society and move civilization and they certainly then cannot be separated from those forces that create a movement of history. Those forces that in a given moment have to do with the decline of civilization or the creation of a new civilization are very much related and are very much important for the question of morality and for moral education.

Now again an obvious statement, but not as obvious as it sounds. It's not as trivial as it sounds because you could say alright what are we talking about. What about the good old virtues ? After all isn't morality a set of virtues that we each have to have ? Don't we always say that the religions from the past have always been teaching the same virtues, the same moral laws ? They have been teaching love, they have been teaching honesty, generosity, compassion. Don't we all say that ? And that again in this religion also, in this new age the acquisition of those same eternal virtues that have been with humanity and every Prophet of

God has talked about is necessary. Isn't that the object of our moral or spiritual education ? Then what is all this complication about society and the forces of civilization and so on ? How come then all of a sudden you are saying that somehow this is time-dependant. That somehow the meaning of moral education today is different from the meaning of moral education two thousand years ago, if love has always been love. So one can also ask that question and the answer of course is well, yes, virtues are virtues, moral education is the acquisition of these virtues but the fact remains that the understanding of the meaning of the spiritual qualities or a moral law, the way it is applied, its implications are not constant in time at all. As society advances the same words take totally new meanings. And until and unless we understand them in their new meaning, we are going to miss the whole question of moral education and even with our own children's classes we are apparently going to be developing virtues and talking about moral laws but we are going to be doing it exactly the same way that the Christians are doing it or the Muslims are doing it or the way that it was done a thousand years ago or two thousand years ago with the wisdom of those times without any real consideration for the needs of today.

Let me read a quotation from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha where he clearly says this but I don't know how much we have thought about it in this context. We often read the passages from the Writings in different contexts and we don't connect them together or to the contexts that are not exactly the thing that we are looking at the time. He says "from every standpoint the world of humanity is undergoing a reformation. The laws of former governments and civilization are in process of revision. Scientific ideas and theories are developing and advancing to meet a new range of phenomenon. Invention and discovery are penetrating hitherto unknown fields revealing new wonders and

hidden secrets of the material world. Industries have vastly wider scope and production. Everywhere the world of mankind is in the throes of revolutionary activities indicating the passing of the old conditions and advent of the new age of reformation. Old trees yield no fruitage. Old ideas and methods are obsolete and worthless now. All the standards of ethics, moral codes and methods of living in the past will not suffice for the present age of advancement and progress". So He is calling for new moral codes and new standards of ethics even though spiritual qualities have always been the subject of all the religions in the past. So really when one begins to think about the context of morality and moral education, it becomes clear that change is the order of the day. That somehow the morality of change has to be considered and not the morality of keeping the status quo and that somehow the morality of change is not necessarily the same as the morality of no change, of keeping the status quo. The point at stake is the building of a new civilization. We all talk about the advancement of science and technology, the great choices that all of a sudden humanity has got and we know that these choices now vary from the possibility of annihilation of the whole human race to the building of a most glorious civilization. What of course the majority of humanity is not yet attuned to is that these choices that they are talking about are not simply choices of this technology versus that technology, they are not scientific and technological choices they are not political and economic choices, they are basically moral choices and that a new morality and a new moral education has to bring about a new generation of human beings who are capable of making these new moral choices. Now you can have wonderfully loving people, very generous, very honest and trustworthy and so on who will make the most terrible choices when it come to

choices of technology, the choices of different ways that are open to society unless their morality, the way they have been trained in morality, has gone beyond traditional acquisition of virtues. Unless they have many more virtues than traditionally was expected of us to have and unless the same virtues that have the same names as before, now have taken a new meaning so that trustworthiness now doesn't mean the same thing as trustworthiness a thousand years ago. It means that plus much more. So, these are questions that I hope as we go on with these ideas with examples and so on, you will actually see what it is that we are really trying to convey. So, the traditional concept of a good person somehow proves to be inadequate today. The good person who doesn't lie, who doesn't do harm to anybody, who loves his neighbour, who lives according to the Golden Rule and all these wonderful things that continue to be wonderful things, somehow is not enough. He is not as moral as we need him to be. He is not immoral but he is not as moral as really this time we live in, of great change, requires of him. We need a morality of an active person. The morality of a passive good person is not good enough any more. We have to develop a system of moral education that creates people who are able to build a new civilization and are able to bring about change.

The question we need to ask is how much are we doing with our children and with ourselves and with our youth? And how much what we call moral education at this point, is concerned with the upbringing of a good Christian or a good Muslim or a good citizen of the world as defined before and how much with the upbringing of a new personality that humanity has never seen before. Who is moral in the sense that he has all the moral instruments and the moral authority and the moral power to participate in social transformation, to participate in the creation of a new civilization? While you think about that let

me say a few more words about some of the implications of this way of looking at the question of the development of spiritual qualities and virtues which as I said before still will be the object of moral education and we will still have to look at the question of trustworthiness and honesty and love and compassion. It's just that their meanings are going to have to be expanded enormously.

Now what we are saying really about the ability of this moral individual to change the world and the fact that his/her morality is closely related to his/her ability to bring about change in himself/herself. This very important quality or ability in the person that the moral education system has to develop, is the capability of working on oneself and working on the environment at the same time, in order to change the environment. This means that a system of moral education while it is concerned with the morality of the individual, has also to be concerned simultaneously with the change of the structures of society, to create the ability in the individual to change the structures of society.

I would like to give you a couple of examples to see why and how important that it is. Take the question for example of prejudice. Now for most of us coming from a tradition in which the individual is everything, good or bad, anything bad in society is because individuals are bad, anything good in society is because individuals are good, because most of us have difficulty thinking of society as anything more than just the sum of the individuals. Social forces, the structures, all these are too abstract ideas that we don't want to deal with. So as far as we are concerned, society is just a bunch of individuals so if they are all good then society is good, if they are all bad society is bad. It's a very simple

way of looking at the world. So one would think that if prejudice is bad so the way you have a system of moral education that teaches people not to have prejudice, then prejudice will disappear. It is as simple as that. But let us take for example, a person, in this case a man, who has no prejudice against women, really in his heart has accepted that men and women are equal and fine. Now this very good unprejudiced person, if he lives in a society where one of the structures of society, let's say family, with all its traditions and cultural views and unspoken rules is such that it does not allow men and women to participate in things equally. This very good unprejudiced person will participate in the process in a system in which men dominate women and he will never know it, if he does not understand that prejudice is not just the matter of individual attitudes, it is also a problem of the structures of society.

Along the same lines, if the structures of society are such that just the way the educational system is established, the way the timings of examinations is established, the way the questions are established, naturally will not allow equal numbers of men and women to achieve certain levels so that they could participate in all the affairs in society. Not because there are any laws or any strictures that say no to women but because they have organized things traditionally from the time when there was prejudice in such a way that in very subtle ways the women are barred from certain activities. When you finally look at the statistics, because of the period of time that the woman is bearing a child and so on, it just works in such a way that they can't. You can have all the wonderful attitudes and this man really has no prejudice at all but he will be participating in a society the structures of which embody prejudice against women. This is just one example because I know that so many of us have difficulties with this question of structures and of course I know that in many of your minds you say but if all the attitudes change then won't the structures

change? The answer is no because these two things work on each other and you will never get all the attitudes to change unless you are working at the same time on changing some of the structures.

Another example I can give you is that you can have a person who believes in justice, believes in equity, who is a person of great rectitude of conduct but he works in a system in which the way to reach important decisions is by lobbying. Lobbying is accepted as an ethical way of establishing the laws of society. What does lobbying mean? Lobbying means that groups who have certain interests of their own not necessarily the interests of society, will put pressure according to their power in order to move society in such a way that they gain or keep their interests. Now, how can this very just person actually be just in that society? What does it mean that he is just? If the structure of decision-making of the society has inherent in it injustice, has inherent in it that those who have more power will get more power because lobbying is considered immoral to do behind closed doors, but if you do it openly, it is legal, it is ethical and it is moral. If that is the moral structure of society what does it mean then to say that a person can reach the heights of justice. He can be just within that framework and in his own dealings with people he can be just but he cannot go all the way in his justice and in his love for equity. These are just examples to show that the theme of moral education cannot be only personal virtues in the old sense. Somehow some new virtues have to come in which enable the person to work on the structures of society and understand those structures that are not moral in the highest sense and not participate in them, change them, again in ways that are moral according to the Baha'i teachings. This means through unity building not through conflict,

not through revolution in the old sense and not through the use of force but by the use of the tongue and the powerful utterances but consistently working and trying to change the structures of society. So this is an important example again which often doesn't occur to us. Now this has very practical applications. All of these things have very practical applications. Somehow as we bring up our little children in our moral education classes we have to be sure that by the time they are eighteen years old, we have given them this capacity or this ability. And we haven't just tried to create wonderful individuals in the old sense, to educate people who are just wonderful people but can just go along society, follow its wrong things and not even understand what is wrong with it and their only answer to everything is "oh, if everybody would love each other a little bit more, if we would all live by the Golden Rule, every problem would be solved". So moral education for us will have to mean something much more than that. This is the statement of the late Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, Shoghi Effendi. He says that "we cannot segregate the human heart from the environment outside us and say that once one of these is reformed, everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world. His inner life moves the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it. The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions. The world will not be changed by only changing the human heart". From a letter dated 17th February 1933 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer.

Let me say a few more words of this concept of the relationship between the question of building civilization of being involved in making history and the question of individual virtues and the acquisition of spiritual qualities of our soul. The problem is or the challenge is that even the meaning of qualities or the way we understand what qualities mean depends often on the social and

cultural context within which we live and often on the kind of ideological background that we have. Let me give you just one example. Take such qualities as humility, obedience, courage, frankness. Suppose a system of moral education by the best people of the world is given in a social organization in which the majority are there to serve the few lords. That is the social structure and the stability of society depends on that. Now think of a Sunday class or a Children's class in which the teacher tells the children of that population of those people, about courage or about obedience and what will the teacher tell them – the same virtues, extolling virtues that we all believe in. Now take another class in a society which considers the individual as the ultimate reality which is based on unbridled individualism like some societies, what will they say about courage, obedience, humility and so on. Then think what a society which considers on the one hand that one of the purposes of society is to allow the spiritual growth of the individual. But on the other hand, the will of the individual can only operate in absolute submission to the Will of God and not only that, it has to be heavily modified by the will of the community of the totality of the people. What would they say about humility, courage, frankness and obedience? Now they would all be teaching the same virtues but depending on what is on their mind, what society is on their mind, what culture is on their mind, what social ideology is on their mind, they will be teaching very differently. The question again is when we teach our children about the virtues, the part that we have them memorize the quotations is fine, but then the things we say, the things we write, the games we play so that they learn that virtue, the poetry that we pull out of our little books here and there and then from our cultural background, all the things we do to teach them these virtues and qualities, where did they come from? What images do

we have in our mind? What society are we thinking about? These are all very important issues then of moral education. What I have been trying to do is to convince you that moral education is not as simple as it sounds. But you see how easy it is to fall for things thinking that one is doing very well without really considering the totality, the wholeness of the question of moral education and the morality of this new race of men, this new person who has never existed in the history of humanity – a Baha'i. In our own history the morality of Quddus, the morality of Tahirih, of Mulla Husayn. Not the morality of a movie star, of a singer, of a philosopher, of a university professor, of a successful businessman or all the other idols we have created from the best that we have in this world. We have to be clear about our goal and about where we want to go. This question of moral education in the context of the development of our own qualities and changing society, clearly has to do with the understanding of one of the basic forces that creates the historical moment, which is that force that is pushing humanity from childhood into adulthood. Unless we understand that and unless somehow this concept is clearly present in whatever conception of moral education we have, we are going to miss the boat. We have to understand that the basic force that propels us and propels history is that force of God that is pushing humanity forcefully taking him out of childhood and making him to be a mature person. Therefore the morality of the child is not our concern, it is the morality of the adult. We have to understand that we are working with an adolescent. Those of you who are educators certainly know that you can't deal with a six year old the same way as with a fourteen year old. The adolescent is different. What is going on in the soul of an adolescent. Humanity is an adolescent. Therefore the question of that moral education, that process of moral education, that takes the adolescent and helps him to become a mature youth is not the same as that moral education that two thousand years ago had to deal with six year old children, with humanity as a

child. So again another indication of the fact that somehow we will have to come up with something different than the old set of repeating the virtues and giving the old common wisdom passed on from one generation to another. We also have to understand that this great spiritual force has set in motion what we all know from the Guardian to be two parallel processes – one of integration, one of disintegration. And that the forces of disintegration are strong and to educate a person morally, who has the moral capability of resisting the forces of disintegration and be able to dedicate himself/herself a 100% to the process of integration and construction, is quite a challenge. So again these are all the different aspects of some of the aspects, some of the contextual questions and issues that have to be considered if we are going to talk about a system of moral education.

Now let me stop here and go back to the question I asked you. Think about what we do, what we have done to what extent are we successful in giving this kind of moral education, to bring this kind of preparation in our children and to what extent are we not. What are some of the things that we would have to do in order to be able to be more successful in educating this new moral person who is a true agent of change and an agent of transformation of society.

In that sense, that mystical unity, that mystical oneness has to be understood for this moral individual who is going to change the world, to be able to operate at the level that is needed to change the world. Another force that shapes the sense of purpose is attraction to beauty. You can have a great deal of purpose – you want to change the world, you want to change yourself, you want to do all sorts of things but this

will not come about just by your pushing. The forces have to be forces pulling you, have to be forces of attraction and the greater attraction is attraction to beauty. Therefore one of the most important forces that shapes your purpose, the purpose of this moral person has to be attraction to beauty. Now this attraction to beauty and perfection manifests itself in different ways. In the concrete world it manifests in arts, in music, in crafts, in attraction to the beauty of nature, to the diversity. In the world of ideas it expresses itself in appreciation for the beauty of ideas, for elegance of a scientific theory, for order, for the beauty of character. So you see morality in itself, the good character, its beauty becomes an attractive force that pulls people towards it.

Too much attempt has been made to create morality without attraction to beauty and it is really an impossibility. But it is attraction to beauty that again shapes it, gives it a different texture, a different characteristic to that purposeful person that we are trying to educate. Because the purposeful person can be all sorts or kinds of purposeful persons but the one we want is motivated by unity, by true self-knowledge, by attraction to beauty. This is a different purposeful man than all sorts of other purposeful people that we know who with a great purpose are destroying the world and sometimes with very good intentions behaving wrongly because their purpose is not shaped correctly or has not been formed by the right forces, has not been molded in the proper manner.

We are talking in very abstract terms but once in a while some concrete examples may help all these attempts in trying to teach chastity to the young people. All you have to do is to show them real beauty and to educate them from childhood to appreciate beauty, real beauty not the substitute for beauty. When someone is attracted to real beauty they are not going to fall for this nonsense that tries to present itself as beauty. This is a much easier way of

doing it than spending one's life trying to tell somebody "don't do this, don't do that and protect them. But if one could have established right from the beginning a true appreciation for beauty and an attraction to proven beauty then it would be much easier for the person to discern and say no, I don't want to go this way. This is a substitute and this is not the way to go as this is a cheap substitute for what I really have seen and what I can appreciate as beauty". Let me share with you a couple of quotations. This is really a very beautiful and profound statement. This is from Baha'u'llah in the Gleanings. I think it merits a great deal of reflection. He says "from the exalted source and out the essence of His favour and bounty He hath entrusted every created being with a sign of His knowledge, so that none of His creatures may be deprived of its share in expressing each according to his capacity and rank this knowledge". So He has entrusted every human being, every created thing in fact, with some aspects as the sign of His knowledge.

He says this sign is the mirror of His beauty in the world of creation. The greater the effort exerted for the refinement of this sublime and noble mirror, the more faithfully will it be made to reflect. He says, "O Son of Dust! All that is in heaven and earth I have ordained for thee, except the human heart which I have made the habitation of My beauty and glory....". "O Friends! Abandon not the everlasting beauty for a beauty that must die, and set not your affections on this mortal world of dust". That is the Hidden Word which goes much further to helping our youth in the avoiding of the social problems of our modern world than a thousand sentences of traditional wisdom that we all carry with ourselves and good advice and everything else. The understanding of that Hidden Word if that is really implanted in a child or a youth's heart will protect him.

Another force which also comes from self-knowledge is the force of recognition of our basic nobility and our basic integrity. The sense of purpose is shaped again by an absolute conviction that we are noble. Remember this Hidden Word “O Son of Spirit! I created thee rich, why dost thou bring thyself down to poverty? Noble I made thee, wherewith dost thou abase thyself? Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being, why seekest thou enlightenment from anyone beside Me? Out of the clay of love I molded thee, how dost thou busy thyself with another? Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting.” The force of this recognition, of this nobility again makes and shapes the purpose of our moral individual very differently than the purpose of many other kinds of people. “O My Servant! Thou art even as a finely tempered sword concealed in the darkness of its sheath and its value hidden from the artificer’s knowledge. Wherefore come forth from the sheath of self and desire that thy worth may be made resplendent and manifest unto all the world.”

I would like to mention another force that shapes the sense of purpose – the force of love for knowledge, not only for self-knowledge which was the source of the understanding of unity and the understanding of nobility and so on but the love for the understanding of the mysteries of creation. So again, to have a system of education or moral education which does not instill in the individual, love for knowledge is having a very defective system. Baha’u’llah says “in truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man and a source of glory, of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him. Happy the man that cleaveth unto it and woe betide the heedless”.

The first attribute of perfection is learning and the cultural attainment of the

mind. It is given to man to obtain knowledge, to obtain to great spiritual perfection, to discover hidden truths. The happiness and pride of a nation consist in this, that “it should shine out like the sun in the high heaven of knowledge.” In defining and exploring the context within which a system of moral education will develop spiritual qualities, the development of a two fold sense of purpose is essential. But that the sense of purpose has to be shaped by such things as the sense for the eternal, a feeling of eternity, an orientation towards service, self-knowledge, the conviction of the unity of mankind, attraction to beauty, recognition of human nobility and passion for knowledge.

So one of the main tasks of moral education would be to somehow create these forces or not necessarily create them as they are there, but to bring them into play within the individual from childhood and somehow help throughout the years to shape a very purposeful human being, moral human being with a high sense of purpose, dedicated to the development of his/her own spiritual qualities and the transformation of society.

Therefore the most important goals of moral education would be to develop in each generation, in our children and youth, a sense of purpose. That unless we create a sense of purpose it doesn’t exactly make sense to talk about the development of virtues in our children and youth. It makes some sense but really what we need is to create a very clear cut sense of purpose. This sense of purpose is two fold. This purposeful individual is considering the development of his/her own spiritual qualities. At the same time it is the sense of purpose of the transformation of society. So this two fold purpose will have to be

somehow a very important axis of this whole process of moral education. The question of individual growth implies a very purposeful attitude. It implies a volition that the person wishes to be fully engaged in the development of both – those qualities that belong to all of humanity – truthfulness, love, kindness and so on and at the same time the development of those talents that are unique to each individual. So our definition of a moral person then includes this attitude, this ability and this will, that I am going to dedicate my energy, that I am going to work hard in order to develop both my qualities as a human being which are common to everybody and develop those unique talents that God has given me so that I can contribute uniquely in a unique way to society that is half of my purpose. And then the other half of it has to do with a devotion and dedication and determination to help build a better and transformed society that of course implies a sense of history and an understanding of where we come from and where we are in the history of humanity. It implies an understanding of the great powers that are available to humanity because of this new age, because of what is happening, because of this change from childhood to maturity. New powers have appeared, new possibilities have appeared. So, our system of moral education would have to somehow instill in its students from childhood this kind of understanding so that sense of purpose is developed. The development of this sense of purpose cannot be done in vacuum, it can't just be something, you talk about. You say, alright you have to develop yourself, and you have to contribute to society. You know, we just keep saying this to children as they grow up. This sense of purpose is a very complex attribute of the human mind and the human heart and there are many forces that shape it and a system of moral education, a process of moral education would have to ensure that all of these forces come to play otherwise this purposeful individual may not, although he/she has a sense of purpose turn out to be as moral as we want to be. So it is not just any sense of purpose. It is not just any

manifestation of human will, it is not just any manifestation of perseverance. It is a sense of purpose that is shaped by the force of a number of very profound convictions and understanding.

I would like to mention six or seven of these forces and suggest to you that our efforts of moral education will have to take into account these forces and right from childhood will somehow have to develop these forces, those convictions and beliefs that created and shaped - the two-fold sense of purpose in the way that we actually want it to be. I think the first force is the force of a vision of human existence, is the force of a vision of eternity. Without a sense of eternity this moral human being that we are going to try to develop cannot really function the way we want. It is essential that this moral person differentiates between those actions that bring him/her immediate satisfaction and those actions and behaviors that imply eternal happiness. The kind of moral individual we are talking about has the sense that he has to change himself, he has to develop his own talents, he has to help transform society. In other words if the development of my own talents and qualities or the improvement of society around me in itself becomes my goal, it is not good enough. The sense of eternity is needed. In this sense there has to be a very clear cut understanding as the child grows and develops the ability to differentiate between what is excitement and what is true joy and happiness. Because it is too easy to fall in love with excitement and become motivated even in the name of bringing change in the world, even in the name of helping others or serving others but by the excitement of it and not by the true joy and happiness which again has to do with a sense of eternity. One of the signs of moral decay in the society that we live in is that people have forgotten what joy is and they

think excitement is joy and happiness and therefore they are constantly after excitement. Today they may find it in such and such sect or religion, tomorrow they will find it in something else, in some political parties or in following some pleasures or whatever it is but it is the constant insatiable search for excitement that motivates a lot of people to do good things, that is not enough. There has to be a distinction between excitement and joy and deep happiness.

What it means probably for our efforts then to teach in our Children's Baha'i Classes for moral education or spiritual education is that we would have to make sure from the beginning an understanding of the nature of the soul being developed in the child. When they are very young this may take different forms but certainly at a certain age probably the early teens, the Baha'i child, junior youth now must necessarily be able to delve into Writings about the nature of the soul and the meaning of life and death in a profound way and become familiar with it and understand it. It cannot be just left to a superficial level of well, we live afterwards or whatever it is. It is the essential that this Baha'i child or this Baha'i youth recognizes and understands clearly that life is not the comings and goings of this life, that life is the life of the soul that begins on the earth and for a while goes on here then continues and a clear understanding that through happiness and through joy from this journey itself, actually coming closer and closer to God. In that sense right here we can live in heaven and that right here everything that we expect in the next worlds of God is possible to achieve. We have our limitations but this is life already if we consider it to be the life of the soul. But if life is where I go, what I do, what I study, what I eat, all of the things that have to do with this earthly existence, if that is the meaning of life then what we are trying to develop that is, this profound sense of purpose will develop the way that we want it. So the understanding of the meaning of life, the meaning of happiness of the soul are essential. And we

have of course many more passages in the Writings that tell us about the life of the soul, about happiness and about the spiritual joy which are an essential aspect of the constitution of a moral purpose.

Then of course there are also those passages from the Writings that clearly tell us that happiness is the acquisition of virtues, that happiness is in integrity, in self-respect. So we would have to make sure that our children truly understand the meanings of quotations like these. I would just read a couple of them to you. This is from Abdu'l-Baha : "Man's supreme honour and real happiness lies in self-respect in high resolves and noble purposes, in integrity and moral quality, in immaculacy of mind. Know, ye, verily that the happiness of mankind lieth in the unity and harmony of the human race. The happiness and greatness, the rank and station, the pleasure and peace of an individual have never consisted in his personal wealth but rather in his excellent character, his high resolve, the breath of his learning and the ability to solve different problems. O, beloved friends, strive diligently to acquire such goodly qualities and traits of character as will be the cause of everlasting salvation. Truthfulness and sincerity have always been the ornaments of man's character and so they shall ever be". So in this sense then the sense of purpose we are talking about has to be informed, has to be shaped partially by the sense of eternity and by the understanding of what is immediate and what is eternal, what vanishes and what is lasting. Without that, the kind of morality that we are talking about does not come about.

Then the second force that has to also come into play and shape a sense of purpose is the force of understanding that this eternal

happiness, this lasting happiness and the contribution to the progress of society are intimately connected, that the two are not separate from each other. The understanding to help ourselves and to help others are the two aspects of the same process and cannot be separated. If this understanding does not come about then one has the problem of either emphasizing too much one's own individual growth even if it's spiritual growth or emphasize too much social change. But to understand the balance between the two, not as two opposite things that you would try to balance, not as things you put in contraposition, this moral person cannot sit down and decide "alright, now, do I do this for myself or do I do this for society?" That cannot be the mindset of the person. "Do I now sacrifice my own good for the good of society?" How can it be? Maybe the good of society and your good are the same thing and what you think you are sacrificing for society couldn't be good for you. We do that constantly. We think, should I sacrifice something that is good for me for the good of the faith. How can that be? If something is not good for the Faith and you are going to do it, can it be good for you? So you see this sense of purpose we are talking about is this two-fold sense of purpose but this moral individual has to understand that they are really the same that they are totally connected with each other and there cannot be any contradictions between them. In this sense helping others and helping ourselves are the two aspects of the same process. Service becomes the basic link that connects these two aspects of this two-fold process. Service is the thing that gives unity and integrity to our purpose and to our being. We don't become divided between ourselves and society, between ourselves and the rest of humanity. We become one integral whole and the thing that manages to connect the two or makes these two things integral, is service. Therefore this moral person we are talking about certainly has to understand the station of service and his/her purpose has to be shaped by the forces of service so that this integrity can be

maintained. Again the quotations on service are plenteous. Let me share a few of them with you. "The days when idle worship is deemed sufficient are ended. The time has come when only the purest motive supported by deeds of stainless purity can ascend to the throne of the Most High and be acceptable unto Him". "That one indeed is the man who today dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race". "Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth". Again, "is there any deed in the world that would be nobler than service to the common good. Is there any greater blessing conceivable for a man than that he should become the cause of the education, the development, the prosperity and honour of his fellow creatures". We are not then talking about the moral individual who is not basically a selfish person who also does good for others. That's really what I am trying to point out. We have plenty of those in the world. But service and the constant dedication to the well being of others is an integral part of the very purpose that motivates and pushes this moral person forward.

Another force is the force of self-knowledge . This sense of purpose we are talking about cannot be something the person acquires throughout their life because the system of education constantly repeats to them in one way or another that they are supposed to have a purpose, they are supposed to serve. It has to come from inside and therefore it has to be based on the knowledge of the reality of things. It is the question of the knowledge of the reality of things and more than anything else this knowledge of the reality of the things implies self-knowledge. Now this self-knowledge as you know has nothing to do with going inside ourselves and getting lost in our egos which many people do. It is very

objective the study of the self. Baha'u'llah tells us that man should know his own self and recognize that which leadeth unto glory or abasement, wealth or poverty. So it is not based on some kind of a romantic notion that we are wonderful, that we are almost God. A system of moral education cannot be based under absurd praise of the individual – you are great, you are wonderful, you can do anything just look inside yourself. That is not what one reads in the Writings. It is a systematic understanding of what is inside of us. It is not done in vacuum. It is done within a very clear cut theoretical framework about the nature of man, about having the animal nature which is there and having the higher nature, about knowing and learning what things strengthen our higher nature and what things strengthen our lower nature. It is the systematic study of weakness and strength. It is quite scientific and it is quite objective. But this study is done in the light of the revelation of Baha'u'llah. This acquisition of self knowledge is not according to the latest most fashionable psychological theory. You know the quotations about the two natures of man that in man there are two natures – the spiritual or higher nature and his material or lower nature and so on by Abdu'l-Baha. You know this quotation “man is in the highest degree of materiality and at the beginning of a spirituality. That is to say he is at the end of imperfection and in the beginning of perfection. He is at the last degree of darkness and in the beginning of light. He has the animal side as well as the angelic side and the aim of the educator is to so train human souls that their angelic aspect may overcome their animal side.” This quotation is from Some Answered Questions.

Now from self knowledge another source arises that again comes to shape our sense of purpose and this is the force of our own consciousness of the organic unity of mankind. It is the understanding and the consciousness that we are all part of an organic whole. That we are the drops of an ocean and that our real

individuality, our real self actually becomes apparent when we reach the stage of oneness with humanity. That knowledge of basic unity is not an imposed unity. It is not imposed solidarity. It is the knowledge of the reality of things, this is the way things are, this is who I am. Again this is not the matter of convenience that if we are united we will live better, if we are united we will each be happier, fine. But the point is that oneness is the reality of our existence and separateness is not the reality of our being. The force of that recognition is a very important and strong force that again shapes the purpose. So this purposeful moral individual becomes a person who is constantly searching for unity and not for superficial degrees of unity but is searching for true oneness. He sees in others the fulfillment of his/her own purpose of his/her own life. In the happiness of the rest of mankind he sees the fulfillment of his own happiness. Because that is the way he feels. So that is the most important force that shapes the purpose of this moral individual.

In a practical level, this sense of unity which we would have to foster again in our system of education among our children and youth allows a person who is purposeful, who wants to transform society, who wants to overcome oppression, who wants to establish justice, who wants to create the structures of a new society and a new civilization but does all of those things without anger, without resentment, without any hatred. This is the purposeful individual who moves along, who changes things. What I would like to discuss is the concept that this moral and purposeful person, this person whose morality is defined in terms of activities not just in terms of passivity or just being good and not doing harm to anybody is one who understands morality as an active principle to achieve personal transformation and the transformation of society.

This person also has to develop in addition to having a purpose, a two fold purpose which is shaped by different forces, has to develop a number of capabilities through a system of moral education and especially has to ensure that from childhood up to youth somehow he is capable and developed.

I want to say a few words about what I mean by the word capability and how I am using the word “capability”. Let me give you the example of a farmer who is excellent in producing a certain crop say the crop of corn. This is the person who really knows how to produce corn. Now this capability of this farmer of being a good producer in itself consists of many things. It consists of certain specific skills and abilities, he must be able to plant well, he must be able to weed well, he must be able to do a lot of tasks well. So you see he has a lot of skills. It involves understanding many important concepts about agriculture, about the way the corn grows and about how to take care of the plants and how to fight the different enemies – insects and so on of the plant. So he needs skills and abilities. He needs understanding of certain concepts. He has to have certain knowledge. He has to have certain attitudes towards work, attitude towards the field of the corn that he has planted and towards nature. All of these things together – the skills, the ability, concepts and understanding, knowledge, information he has, about weather and crisis and all sorts of things and the attitudes that he has, all of these things together make him a person capable of producing corn in his field very well, year after year. So in that sense I am talking about the work and capability not just as small skills and abilities but as something bigger that really makes people capable of doing certain things. The process of moral education clearly would have to develop in the children and in the youth thousands of skills and abilities and help them understand many concepts and develop in them many attitudes and of course all the spiritual qualities rather than just listening to them. One can

sort of look at them and understand them in terms of a number of bigger attributes which we call capabilities. It is easier to think that way. It is certainly easier to set an objective for an educational programme and figure out how it is that one goes about developing capabilities and goes about carrying out and establishing a system of moral education.

I will give you some examples of these capabilities and we will look at some of the components of these capabilities, some of the attitudes, abilities, skills and so on that build up each capability. Now if the first capability which would be the capability of showing initiative, this moral person whom we are defining as an active individual, obviously needs to be able to show initiative and have initiative. In the system of moral education, this moral person would have to develop the capability of showing initiative through the process of moral education, an ability to show initiative, but again with certain conditions. Two of these conditions are important from the others. One is that this initiative has to have the attribute of creativity, has to be creative and therefore a system of moral education has to foster creativity. Without it things will not work. It's not a set of rules that a person memorizes. At the same time this initiative has to be disciplined and the process of education has to make sure that both these things are correct. Now there are a lot of abilities and attitudes, concepts and understandings and so on that one has to talk about in order to think of the development of an initiative which is creative and disciplined at the same time. For example, creativity is the sense involving the ability to evaluate your inner state. Also to evaluate the conditions of one's environment and then by looking at these two things identify opportunities for growth and opportunities for development for oneself and for society. These things are so connected that we couldn't

possibly separate them from each other. It involves really a penetrating vision into one's own potentials and also into the potentials of society. In other words, this person who has initiative is creative and has to be able to know what is possible at any given moment in society.

He/she has to be able to identify those forces some of which may be hidden, that if he uses them somehow he will be able to create something different. He/she has to often identify needs and aspirations of other people before the needs and aspirations are expressed by them. Because once they are expressed then everybody knows them. The most creative people are those who can tell what social needs, what aspirations are. What is coming? What is now hidden? What is about to flower? And then they can with this kind of vision, use the forces that exist to create new things. These are some of the attributes of creativity. They would have to analyze and see what forces are present that would actually help their initiatives and which forces would be an impediment to what they want to do and figure out how to deal with them. And what are the most important things for this creative initiative is the ability to understand cycles of crisis and victory and be able to deal with crisis and victory with the constant cycle of crisis and victory that follow each other and the ability to turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones to always further success. To look into crisis and recognize in crisis already those forces and those elements that one needs to build up the next victory. What kind of educational activities could one create that would contribute to the development of all these things. This creativity however is creative initiative, this quality of creativity in one's initiative would actually be destructive in the other sense if it was not disciplined. Now what does this discipline mean? It means that on the one hand while one doesn't fear to make mistakes, one has the discipline not to just go on in a very irresponsible way and make mistakes.

The initiative that we are talking about does not come out of just the praise of self – be yourself, do whatever you want, you are great. The kind of things that we hear in society based on individualism. We are not talking about that kind of initiative - don't let anybody else tell you what to do. All these things that we constantly hear "I, I, my desires, my satisfaction, my expression of what is inside me. That is not the point, because the kind of initiative that we are talking about of this purposeful man is the initiative for the creation of a society, for contribution to the building of a civilization. It's not just an expression of whatever is inside. So one has to be careful about how far one can go. There is a strong feeling of social responsibility that should accompany initiative if it is going to be channeled in a positive way. This involves an attitude of learning and that is probably one of the greatest abilities, the greatest attitude that we have to develop in our children and youth the right kind of attitude towards learning. An attitude towards learning involves the number of qualities which modify each other – courage but at the same time humility, perseverance, determination. It involves a very clear understanding between the boundaries between freedom and license, between rights and responsibilities. Obviously it cannot be the kind of initiative that arises from this individual who feels that the whole universe was created for him. So the concept of freedom that we mentioned before, that freedom which is actually submission to the Will of God has to be understood by our children and by our youth as we help them develop initiative. Otherwise we go the ways of the world of educating a bunch of aggressive human beings whom nothing will stop from trying to reach to what they want to reach in the name of initiative and in the name of individual rights. We do not want people who just sit around for somebody to give them orders. Activity is an essential element of

morality. So that's one kind of capability, a very complex one that we will have to learn to develop in our processes of moral education. Let me just read a couple of quotations from the Guardian. He says "high aims and pure motives however laudable in themselves will surely not suffice if unsupported by measures that are practicable and measures that are sound. Wealth of sentiment, abundance of good will and effort will prove of little sway if we should fail to exercise discrimination and restraint and neglect to direct their flow along the most profitable challenges". So this discipline in a certain sense is to allow the creativity that each individual has, to flow into the right channels. He also says "the unfettered freedom of the individual should be tempered with mutual consultations and sacrifice and the spirit of initiative and enterprise should be reinforced by a deeper realization of the supreme necessity for concerted action and fuller devotion to the common need". Actually this initiative is reinforced by dedication to the common goal and to the collective way. It is not something that is quenched by it if it is the right kind of initiative and of course if we have created the right kind of community, the right kind of society which allows that kind of an initiative to be expressed.

Now another capability that this moral person has to develop and our system of moral education has to help to develop is the capability of building unity. It is one thing to feel that one believes in the unity of mankind. One thing that I don't have prejudice, one thing to love everybody. But it is another thing, to be a builder of unity. This capability of building unity wherever one is, is a much more complex capability and ability than just being there and saying well, I really think all mankind are drops of one sea and leaves of one branch and I really do believe that. Let's just believe it. Now the capability of building unity constantly requires effort. What kind of concept and attitudes, abilities and skills are examples. Obviously the person who is a builder of unity has to

constantly strive to overcome his/her own prejudice. But this is not enough. He has to understand the nature of prejudice and then transcend it. He should be a constant worker for the eradication of prejudice. But should not have anger and resentment against prejudice or against those who have prejudice. He has to understand weakness, has to be humble and understand that after all prejudice is something that people can fall prey to very easily. That is, it takes effort and courage not to have prejudice. So the builder of unity cannot be a victim of prejudice in either way. He cannot be a victim of it in a sense of having it but cannot be a victim of it in a sense of feeling so much anger towards certain prejudice that he can't see anything else and therefore cannot work for the eradication of prejudice in a systematic and effective way. So this is one of the qualities or one of the abilities of a builder of unity.

Another ability is the ability to identify certain principles and whenever in discussion or in consultation or in a situation be able to raise the discussion to the level of a principle where it is easier to reach unity. And the ability when there is conflict, to recognize what is essential and what is secondary, because it is much easier to reach unity. So a builder of unity is capable of letting the secondary things go by in order to be able to reach unity at the level that it really matters. Another ability of this builder of unity or another say understanding that a builder of unity must have, is that there are really different levels of unity and he/she must be able to work at different levels and promote different levels of unity depending on where people are. Lowest level of unity is tolerance and if that is where everybody else is then this builder of unity has to work there to start at that level of tolerance. But he cannot be

happy with that because then there is unity of purpose, there is unity of vision, there is unity of thought, there is unity of action and so we have to learn to build unity at all these levels. It's not enough for a Baha'i community for example to have a unity of purpose – the purpose is to conquer the world spiritually. But if there is not a unity of vision of where one wants to go, if there is not unity of thought of how one wants to go about doing it, the very purpose of unifying mankind one can be totally disunited about how to do it. So there are different levels of unity that are needed or you can have a unity of thought but when it comes to action all sorts of other things come about and you cannot work together. So a builder of unity, this moral individual has to have the capability to help people to come to all these different levels of unity.

Again a builder of unity has to be a very skilled listener. Has to understand people's meanings beyond the limitations of the words because one of the causes of this disunity is simply the backwardness of all of us as we can't say what we mean. What we say is far worse than what we mean, what we mean is usually fine but what comes out causes disunity. So a builder of unity has to be able to see beyond these things so that he/she can help others to come to you and we will see the basic unity that already exists in their thoughts and in their purpose and in their vision. He/she has to appreciate the diversity of talents and be able to build the kind of unity that we are talking about by actually helping everyone to express their talents and use their talents and help everyone develop their potential in a process of collective action. So you see this unity that we are talking about in the sense of this moral person in the context of morality it is not a kind of an amorphous thing, it is a very purposeful unity and our moral individual has to be a builder of this kind of unity.

Another capability of this moral individual is that of transcending relations of

dominance. If you look at the human relationships whether it is between two individuals, friends, in most of the families, husband and wife, parents and children then you move to social classes, races, nations, men and women and whatever division you can imagine can distinguish two types, the relations that exist in the world have been usually based on power. It's always the power of one or some over others. Most relations are relations of dominance – somebody dominates and somebody is dominated and most of us go through life being dominated or dominant. We dominate some and are dominated by others and some how the world has been going on in history with this kind of relationships. Politics is in a certain sense the science of regulating dominance, not of eliminating dominance but regulating it by whatever means, depending on what kind of political system people have belief in. Now this moral individual that we are talking about in the process of education that we mentioned, somehow would have to teach from childhood and develop in each individual the capability first to enter into relationships with other people which are not relations of power. At some point it is necessary to begin to help the person to develop capability not only of transcending relations of power in his/her own relationships but also of understanding dominance and all the forces and all the situations that lead to it and again transcend it without anger and so on and be able to work so that relations of dominance disappear and people learn to live in other kinds of much more fruitful relationships. This implies for example the ability to see through all those hidden functions that people have, to make dominance justified because most people don't dominate others thinking that it is bad. Often people dominate others because in their minds that's the way they are actually doing some good to the person they are dominating. So there are all sorts of hidden

assumptions in relationships of dominance and this moral individual has to be able to analyze them and go beyond it, again not be angry with them, not resent them, just understand them so that in a wise manner he/she can fight against dominance.

The question of the equality of men and women takes a place in moral education, to analyze and to teach this transcendence over dominance. Because if one takes, say, the dominance of classes or nations or races and so on, the child usually, in their immediate environment may not be involved in it. It takes for most people some time before they are old enough that they see society in a wider context, but right there in their family, from the first day the question of the equality of sexes arises and the domination in this case of men over women becomes a reality in subtle ways. So in this sense the best way to develop this capability of transcending dominance and working for its eradication is from childhood. Those educational activities and all those educational concepts and so on will help establish in the child both male and female, the full sense of equality of the sexes and if that happens in the family then it's a good beginning for later on to translate into society and into the community.

The fourth capability of this moral individual is the capability to participate in collective enterprises. Many people are wonderful when they are alone and are really in trouble when they have to participate with others in collective projects/enterprises and it doesn't make sense to talk about a moral person alone by themselves. Morality we have already talked about has a very strong social context . To figure out what we are going to do. But to figure out how I can contribute to a goal that is a collective goal is not an easy thing. It is really an ability which has to be developed. The ability and the understanding that I

should submit my will to the collective will. But the other side of the coin is that while I would learn and accept the fact that I should submit my will to the will of the collective, I must have the moral uprightness, to speak up if I see that the collective is doing things that are not morally right. It is not simply a question of submission. It is the question, if I am moral, to stand up and take all the risks of saying that the direction in which our collective is going according to these moral standards is not moral and it should change. So that subtle combination is that ability, that submission of will and at the same time uprightness of courage that contributes to the sense of morality we are talking about.

Then of course the capability of participating in collective enterprises involves all sorts of skills of cooperation. An attitude of cooperation clearly denies competition. Now somewhere in this world of ours, people have decided that they can only achieve excellence through competition. It is part of the ideology of the world and it is 100% false. There is no room for competition in the Baha'i Faith and one does not need competition to become excellent. One can be motivated by much higher ideals. In fact just to remind you of what Baha'u'llah says. "O Son of Dust ! Verily, I say unto thee: Of all men the most negligent is he that disputeth idly and seeketh to advance himself over his brother. Say, O brethren! Let deeds, not words, be your adorning." That much for the basis of capitalism that some how competition is the force that will regulate society. Also this other Hidden Words "O Children of Men ! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with

the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light. Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.” Since Baha’u’llah asked for this and at the same time for excellence, the two things cannot be contradictory. Therefore it cannot be that the way to achieve excellence is through competition. So we do not have to educate our children by putting in their head right from the beginning ‘look at that guy. How much better he is than you in this. Are you going to be behind him ? Aren’t you going to be better than that one?’ We have to do away with competition in our educational system.

Another capability of this moral person is the capability of seeing the underlying morality in every choice that he/she makes. In our individual life we constantly make choices – we decide what to study, we decide where to go, we decide who our friends are, we decide about our marriage. Every minute of our life we make decisions. We make choices. The capability of seeing these choices as almost always moral choices is something very complex, very difficult, that has to be developed in this moral system. To give you an example, to think of the question of science and technology which is one of the essential elements and components of what we call modern and think about the processes of modernization. Now, most of us have been brought up to think that whatever is modern is good. Modern and good are synonymous, traditional and bad are synonymous. Now a lot of money has been spent in this world to get this concept all over the world among all the people of the world and that is called development. Baha’is would say well, wait a minute, we don’t believe that. It is really the fact that technology is technology and science is science. It is the moral person who uses it well or uses it in the

wrong way. That’s obviously true. I think this moral person has the capability to think through these things, and would not come up with certain technology. It is not just the use of technology and it is not just the pursuit of any science. Now, the choice of a nation, of a government to bring in tractors in their country may be an immoral choice. If for example, the bringing of a tractor at too early a stage will actually cause such a havoc in the patterns of life of the villagers that will destroy their lives. For example, in a country in which land distribution is very uneven, subsistence farmers have accessed small plots of land. People with huge amounts of land have access to everything like technology, to modern science, to knowledge, to market. Anything that you bring and put at the disposition of the more powerful, who are dominating the little one, you are giving them even more power to dominate the little ones. So while at least, without tractors these people have a chance to work in those big fields on one hand and also without the tractors the productivity of the thousand hectares was only let’s say so much more than the productivity of one hectare, with the tractor all of a sudden it may become ten thousand more. That choice of technology was immoral because it contributed to injustice. Now again I haven’t said that the tractor is immoral. It was a poor choice in that case. In another country it might have been a very good choice. That is one level.

It could be that in a moral society choices about even the development of technology are moral choices. Therefore it is not just that all technology is good and then we decide whether we use them or not. And therefore a moral person that is the one that we are trying to define, should have the capability of seeing and analyzing at whatever level he/she is working. Not everybody is in the Ministry of some place

making choices but we do make small choices of technology in our own lives. So really the capability of this moral individual to understand the relationship between the human being and the environment and how to take care of the environment and how to use rationally the resources that the environment is putting at our disposal, again, is a very complex capability. It is not a simple thing being a lover of nature. When your stomach is full, you are living comfortably, saying “oh, why do they cut the trees down over there.” They cut the trees down over there because they know that they otherwise will die. All of these things would be important elements to develop and educate an individual who is a good worker but not to work day and night to make more money but contribute to society and participate in voluntary work. He also knows how much one should earn, can manage leisure, can manage work.

Then one more capability I would like to mention is the capability of participating in consultations and that is a big one. It involves many skills. It involves many attitudes, many qualities. You know the very quotations from the Writings that point to those qualities and to those skills. We have managed to explore a much bigger context of the development of spiritual qualities than just making a list of virtues and saying, alright, moral education – here it is – 1,2,3,4,5,6 these are the virtues you have to know . We have given it a historical context, the context of transformation in individuals and social transformation and I hope, by way of just examples because everything I have given has been exemplified. The moral person has to be able to do certain things, has to make choices and constantly has to be an active agent which involves the development of dozens and dozens of capabilities, each one with its own attitudes and so on. We need to think back again to ourselves, about our Children’s Classes, about our families, how we raise our children as we establish Baha’i Schools around the world, as we try to make statements

about morality to the world. It shows us at least the magnitude of what we have to think about and what we have to do and obviously the revelation of Baha’u’llah has the answers to all of these.

As we review and start talking about the question of morality, the morality of change with new moral codes and practical standards we feel the need for additional morality in accordance with the needs of our time and with the fact that we live in a very special time. It is a time in which mankind is leaving the state of childhood and entering the state of maturity during which mankind has to leave behind all the behaviours, the thoughts, the concepts of childhood and acquire the attributes of adulthood. We have talked about a purposeful individual. We tried to define morality in terms of a two fold purpose, a sense of purpose, a purpose that was on one hand concerned with the development of one’s own potentials and one’s own spiritual qualities and on the other hand the social progress and the contribution to an ever advancing civilization. We talked about how the sense of purpose had to be shaped by a number of forces and we gave examples of these forces. Then last time we talked about the capabilities that this moral person who was concerned basically with change and with transformation not with the maintenance of a status quo, the capabilities that he/she had to possess and among these capabilities, we talked about initiatives, the ability to build unity, the participating in collective enterprises and a number of other capabilities were discussed. Now all this time we said that this morality that we were talking about in the context of transformation finally had to be based on spiritual qualities and that at the heart of moral education was a process of spiritual education and that at the heart of morality was spirituality. So having talked about a lot

of things that create the context of this spirituality, we would now like to examine again very briefly the whole question of the development of spiritual qualities. Let me mention a few general concepts about spiritual qualities and then give a few examples of some of the qualities that we need. I think we have already understood that these spiritual qualities are the real us and that is very important to develop these. In other words from everything in this world those spiritual qualities are the things that define our soul and are the things that we will take with us in our eternal journey towards God. Many of the things we talked about, important as they were – civilization and our contribution to it, our abilities, our skills and everything else, a real person is one with the combination of that set of spiritual qualities that we have developed in this world. These spiritual qualities are signs of God in us. These are the signs of the attributes of God being reflected in the mirror of our soul. So unlike most theories of moral education, moral education for Baha'is cannot be simply a question of behaviour or a question of convenience – if you behave this way you will be happier or if you do this and that, society will be better. All of these things are important but at the same time it is essential for us to recognize that the much more basic level or at the much more profound level, all of those things are more or less secondary and at the heart of our existence is the opportunity to develop spiritual qualities. That is the reality of our existence and the reality of our being which will last. As you think and meditate about this question of spirituality and the development of spiritual qualities, study actually different theories and conceptions of moral education, you will see how different this is and what a difference it makes in practice and in what we will finally end up doing.

The development of these spiritual qualities are the real issues. You will be amazed at the number of pages people have written on moral philosophy and

all the things they have said for ages and ages and how it increases confusion unless one keeps very clear the Baha'i point of view and the real purpose of our lives as Baha'u'llah has told us. So that's one aspect of this whole question of morality and spirituality.

The other point is that somehow in the development of spiritual qualities a very special concern is 'excellence'. You all know this passage from the Writings of Abdul-Baha. He said "I desire distinction for you. The Baha'is must be distinguished from others but this distinction must not depend on wealth, that they should become more affluent than other people. It is not an ordinary distinction that I desire; not scientific, industrial, commercial distinction. For you I desire spiritual distinction. That is, you must become eminent and distinguished in morals, in the love of God. You must become distinguished for being a loving community, for unity and accord, for love and justice. In brief, you must become distinguished in all the virtues of the human world, for faithfulness and sincerity, for justice and fidelity, for firmness and steadfastness, for philanthropic deeds and service to the human world, for love towards every human being, for unity and accord with all people, for removing prejudices and for promoting international peace. Finally you will become distinguished for heavenly illumination and for acquiring the bestowals of God. I desire this distinction for you. This must be the point of distinction amongst you." So according to many passages like this specially from Abdu'l-Baha and also from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, our efforts to develop spiritual qualities has to be directed towards achieving distinction and achieving excellence. When the question of excellence in spirituality comes up it is sometimes expressed how striving for excellence is related to that teaching of the

Faith that we should be moderate.

What is moderation? Is it somehow that moderation is half of excellence? That moderation is always the point between things? That is a very erroneous point of view. So when we talk about love and striving for excellence in love, to grow in love continuously then somebody comes up and says 'should we be moderate? If we talk about justice and how we should strive to be more just everyday, somebody will say, oh, what about moderation. As if moderation, you see, is half just, half loving, half kind, half forgiving and that there is such a thing as too much love, too much justice, too much forgiveness, too much mercy. That is fully erroneous. What we have to understand about spiritual qualities is that they themselves modify each other. If we consider for example love and justice or take three qualities – love, justice and detachment, it is not that you should go half way in love, half way in justice and half way in detachment and that's how you are moderate. Love and justice modify each other. Detachment and love modify each other. Detachment and justice modify each other. What you consider to be too much love is love with too little of the other two. It is not too much love so you cannot say stop loving, you have too much of love. No, love more but also increase your quality of justice and be more detached. They will modify each other and that is how you achieve moderation. So moderation is not somehow the lowest common denominator. Moderation is actually achieved at a very high level of excellence. Moderation and mediocrity are not synonymous but for too many of us they have become synonymous. So we hear it said sometimes, don't sacrifice too much, don't give too much to the Faith, don't love too much, detach and be careful. If somebody gets up and talks about detachment – well, wait a minute, isn't that going to somehow do something to you and then you won't walk on earth any more and you won't be any good for anything else. We have to be very careful

that in our processes of moral education we do not bring up children and youth who are mediocre in the name of moderation. Teach them and develop in them all the qualities possible according to their capacities, to the highest point of excellence possible. So, if we understand this, we see very clearly that conceptually one of the greatest challenges for a system of moral education is to understand how the different qualities interact with each other, how they modify each other, how they help each other. It is like trying to understand that a very complex universe, the inhabitants of which are not things or human beings, or vegetables or something like that, but a universe the inhabitants of which are spiritual qualities. One inhabitant is called justice, another one is love, another one is forgiveness, another one is trustworthiness. This is a very complex world in which the spirit of all these qualities interact with each other. We need to understand that spiritual world. A spiritual world in a certain sense exists within each one of us. It is a world that is inside each one of us, inside each one of our souls and who knows it may even have existence outside us.

Remember the very beautiful statement of Baha'u'llah when He was sitting in the Ridvan garden and He looked at his right and He saw this very beautiful being. It was trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was standing and said I am trustworthiness and spoke of her beauty and everything. So what I am trying to say is these spiritual qualities are realities. They are not somehow abstractions that we make from our behaviour. They are spiritual realities that exist and that is another question and another line of thinking that one would have to do at a mystical level. But for the system of moral education that Baha'is will develop during the next decades and centuries, an understanding of the

spiritual qualities and their interactions and the way they affect the human being and what they do inside the soul of each one of us, how they shape the soul and how they affect our emotions, our thoughts, concepts, our behaviour, etc., will have to be understood. As far as we know all the prevalent theories of psychology are materialistic in view. This psychology necessarily is wrong until an understanding of the human should become possible and the understanding of the human soul has to be achieved to a large extent through the understanding of the spiritual qualities – the qualities of the soul. Materialistic psychology obviously refuses to look at that. It is not to say that psychology is no good and one should not study it. But because of the limitations of science there is no possibility of getting real insights into the human being although it can find out a lot of things. It can fix a lot of problems but cannot get an insight into moral education, as long as it refuses to accept the reality of man and study the real qualities of the human.

Now I think in addition to this we also have to consider at the same time a system of moral education, a system of thought or a framework that will help us to figure out the practical matters about moral education which has to consider the interactions of spiritual qualities and the way they can be developed and how a person progresses spiritually. Of course they will also have to consider the relation of the spiritual qualities with the capabilities that mentioned earlier. Because although we are sure the development of spiritual qualities is the purpose of our lives in this world as we said before we do have to come here to develop them. So somehow we have to see what the relation of these spiritual qualities are to our ability to act. For example, a spiritual quality that is justice and then a capability which was the capability of transcending dominations. How do I transcend domination if I have not developed the quality of justice? So these things are very much related.

Everything that we have said have sort of brought us from a very broad point of view to focus on the spiritual qualities but there are connections amongst all these things. A system of moral education would have to study all of these connections, interactions and relationships. We did not have that kind of a system a few hundred years ago but we can discover new things so that each generation can become better and more moral than the previous one.

Now let us look at some of these qualities. The most important idea is that the basic medium within which spiritual qualities can be developed is love in the same sense a medium within which a fish can live is water. The medium within which a soul can exist and grow is love. You take the water away from the fish, there is no life. You take the love away from the soul, there is no life. This is very clear from passages from the Writings. We know that there is this all pervasive love that emanates from God and manifests itself in everything. Abdul-Baha says when we observe the phenomenon of the universe, we realize that the axis around which life revolves is love while the axis around which death and destruction revolve is animosity and hatred. Let us view the mineral kingdom. Here we see if attraction does not exist between the atoms, the composite subject of matter would not be possible. The power of attraction in the mineral world is love. Then he tells us how in the vegetable kingdom the power of growth is added to this love, to the animal kingdom the power of the senses and then finally we reach the kingdom of man. Here we find that all the degrees of the mineral, vegetable and animal expressions of love are present plus unmistakable attractions of consciousness. That is to say man is the possessor of the degree of attraction which is conscious and spiritual. Here is an

immeasurable advance in the human kingdom, spiritual susceptibilities come into view, love exercises its superlative degree and this is the cause of human life.

In another passage Abdu'l-Baha describes for us the difference between the limited forms of love and unlimited love in the kingdom of man looking at our love which is the expression of this all prevailing love in all degrees of existence in the kingdom of man. Most of the love that we have is limited. He talks about the love of our family, the love of our friends, the love of our country, the love of our race and they are all love so they are in some way expressions of this all prevailing love but they are all limited. And then He tells us that all these types of love are imperfect. It is clear the limited material ties are insufficient to adequately express the universal love. The great and unselfish love for humanity is bounded by none of the imperfect selfish bonds. This is one perfect love possible to all mankind and can only be achieved by the divine spirit. No worldly power can accomplish the universal love. Let all be united in this divine power of love. Let us all strive to grow in the sun of truth and reflecting this luminous love on all men. Nay hearts become so united that they may dwell ever more in the radiance of limitless love.

At the heart of this possible spiritual education of our children and youth has to be the effort to develop in them the capacity to love, to reflect the love of God and the capacity to have unlimited love. It is very easy to develop in children selfish love and limited love. It is very easy to turn love towards self or towards other things because of self or because they satisfy self. Unfortunately most relationships that we call love are that way. When you finally analyze much of love, you see that the self is very strongly present in it. I love this person because this person finally does this and that for me. We may be very

sophisticated, it is not that this person gives us money or physical things but somehow he satisfies certain urges that we may have or he makes us feel important. Somehow our needs keep coming into love. I don't think necessarily that is wrong or that now one wants to say we should have no needs or we should not need love.

But according to Abdu'l-Baha all these manifestations of love have to be manifestations of that unlimited, universal love. So the challenge is the difficulty to instill in our children unlimited love, to help them to develop and manifest unlimited love. Now the quotation that we read is very clear that in the human existence all prevailing love manifests itself in a kind of love that involves consciousness. Therefore love and knowledge are very much closely related to each other. This division that has been created between the heart and the mind is one of the silliest things that one can imagine. It comes from a very confused society which does not know what to do either with their mind or their heart. They are so confused that they have no idea which is which. So they have defined something as the heart, another thing as the mind and somehow the two are constantly fighting with each other. Knowledge increases love. Knowledge of God, knowledge of the attributes of God, knowledge of the manifestations of God increases the love for the manifestation of God and love for God. So when sometimes we ourselves say, you don't have to know anything about God, is incorrect, you do need more and more knowledge of God. The more you do the more you should love him, the nature of the soul and all the things and all the mysteries of existence. So if you remember one of the forces that we decided had to shape this purpose of the moral individual was in fact love for knowledge and that again the connection here is love. Now very closely related to love and

knowledge is faith. So again a system of moral education has to endeavour to strengthen faith. The source of faith is faith in God and faith in His manifestations and absolute faith in the mercy of God. Without faith in His mercy and dependence on His mercy, the human soul can easily go to the other part of self-righteousness, of becoming very strict, very hard on one self then very hard on everybody else, full of guilt. Faith in the mercy of God, absolute faith that His mercy is essential for moral behaviour and spiritual growth. Then of course from this faith springs also the other faith – faith in the efficacy of Baha'u'llah's Faith, faith in one's potentialities that I was brought into this world for some reason, faith in the future of mankind that no, it's not going to end, faith in the potentialities of others, faith in the power of love, faith in the power of good which again if you think about it becomes a very strong force that shapes that purpose of this purposeful individual, that feeling of absolute faith because this faith is essential for the will to act.

Now with love, knowledge, faith, obedience becomes easy and obedience becomes something that is real and something that is joyful. The statement of Baha'u'llah "Observe My commandments for love of My beauty" becomes the basis in one's behaviour which is shaped and ruled by absolute obedience to the laws of God, to the laws of the ordinances of Baha'u'llah. But I think it is important to remember that this obedience which springs from the beauty of God has to be protected. We tend to talk a lot of love and forget about the fear of God.

Often in the education of our own children, the education of youth, in our spiritual education we become wishy-washy – love, love, love and love and forget about the fear of God. Fear of God is not the fear of hell or punishment or that kind of fear. In fact you know that Baha'u'llah has said that in future,

knowledge that humanity will gain is the knowledge of how to overcome this fear that will be a very important factor in the happiness of mankind. That is very true but the point is that if you have true love, with it comes the fear of losing love.

We could have been created like the flowers or like the birds. Abdu'l-Baha tells us that the bird sings very well but she doesn't know it, doesn't enjoy it, doesn't understand the beauty of that singing. In order for us to have had knowledge, God created us to have knowledge – that's the greatest bounty and then with it came all sorts of other things. With it came choice because knowledge means distinction. If you are going to say, this is beautiful then you are going to have the capacity and the possibility of saying this is not beautiful and if you are going to say this is just, you are going to be also able to see something that is not just. So knowledge then implies the existence of positive forces, the lack of positive forces not necessarily negative forces but the lack of positive forces. If you are going to understand and have knowledge of light there is no other way to also understand the lack of light which is darkness. Since we have the choice then there is the possibility that our actions will become an impediment in God's love so that we do not receive the great portions of God's love that is there always for us. The Hidden Words "Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O Servant." It is not that He is going to keep His love away from us. But if we shut the doors it doesn't penetrate. Therefore there is the possibility that our actions can deprive us of love. Therefore with love of God comes the fear of God and it is impossible as far as I know to educate according to Baha'u'llah the vast majority without the fear of God. Baha'u'llah says, firstly the Word

of God is described as the Most Exalted Paradise. Verily, I say the fear of God hath ever been a sure defence and a safe stronghold for all peoples of the world. It is the chief cause of the perfection of mankind and the supreme instrument for its preservation. Indeed, there exists in man a faculty which shields and guards him against whatever is unworthy and unseemly and which is known as his sense of shame. All have not possessed and do not possess it". So, the vast majority of us do not have a kind of protection against what is going on and fear of God is that protection. Therefore the obedience that we are talking about which is so much connected with love, with knowledge, with faith, also depends and is protected by fear of God. Moral education has to consider that. And again fear of God is very different from other fears. In fact if you fear God truly then you should not fear anything else. So actually fear of God should help the individual to get rid of all other fears. So it's quite a positive fear.

From among the qualities – rectitude of conduct, truthfulness and trustworthiness stand out amongst the important ones. Baha'u'llah says "trustworthiness is the greatest portal leading unto the tranquility and security of the people. In truth, the stability of every affair dependeth upon it and does depend upon it. All the domains of power and of grandeur and wealth are illumined by its light". Abdu'l-Baha says "truthfulness is the foundation of all virtues, without truthfulness progress and success in all the worlds of God are impossible for any soul. When this holy attribute is developed in man all the divine qualities, are also acquired". This is a statement which really merits a great deal of meditation. Why? Why from all the qualities in the world, somehow truthfulness stands out, that without it nothing can be gained.

To say really how essential truthfulness is, think about the fact that it is that

faculty of the soul that enables it to deal with the truth. I'm saying something very trivial but think about it. Now if you don't have the ability to deal with the truth then where are you going to go? Then how are we going to deal with reality and what does everything else mean? If you can't discern truth then what does it mean to develop the soul, to develop spiritual qualities, to develop one's spirituality? It's like not having eyes and not being able to see anything at all or not having any senses not just the eyes but nothing. So we need to think about truthfulness at a much higher level than just not telling lies. Truthfulness as a quality of the soul has many many manifestations. Truthfulness allows us to have clarity of mind, clarity of vision. Truthfulness allows us to have the capacity to acquire knowledge. I don't see how it is possible to acquire knowledge without truthfulness. If you talk about very good scientists, you talk about the quality of science, one of the things they tell you is the honesty of mind. Science could not have existed without truthfulness. So really the development of this truthfulness and trustworthiness is very essential for the spiritual development of this individual. And again since it is connected with knowledge and it is connected with love, connected with all the other qualities then one can see how it is difficult to perceive reality and perceive truth without justice so justice is another quality that contributes to this rectitude of conduct.

You know many of the quotations from the Writings on justice. Baha'u'llah says "no light can compare with the light of justice". The establishment of the order of the world and the tranquility of the nations depends upon it. No man can attain his true station except through justice. So you see these are statements that merit a great deal of meditation. They are very strong statements. No man can attain his true

station except through justice. These are very very potent statements. Then the one that you know “The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I my confide in thee.” Again “By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and through the eyes of others, shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbour. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.” Therefore if you do not have justice, how do you gain knowledge? How do you weigh knowledge? How do you decide what is true and what is not true. “The light of men is justice. Quench it not with the contrary winds of oppression and tyranny”. The purpose of justice is the appearance of unity among men. We talk about unity a great deal. The question is, is the unity of mankind possible without the appearance of divine justice? These are questions that merit a great deal of meditation and of course in a system of moral education they are very central.

Now one of the things that has happened in our times is that most of us would love to ask for justice for ourselves and so justice has become again a selfish thing. So whoever feels that he is dominated by somebody, arises and asks for justice. It's a wonderful idea to ask for justice as long as it is done within certain limits. But think about it. What you take to the other world with you as a quality of your soul is not that other people were just to you. That was their quality and they take that to the next world. The thing that is you is your justice, that you are just to others. So this constant clamour for justice, fine, we have to establish social justice and a just system in the world. But the real challenge is that I am supposed to be just. That is the quality of justice that Baha'u'llah talks about. Sometimes I think the quotations about justice are one of those whenever they are read, everybody thinks about everybody else and

how much injustice is being done to them. The reference is for you and I and how we are supposed to be just. Is it possible to be just without being generous or forgiving? I don't think it is possible.

One of the most important qualities that modifies and shapes justice is generosity, is giving. Giving is part of justice. Justice has a great component of giving, of sacrificing of ourselves to others, this is justice. In our village a family has a well and the well has water and the wells of all the neighbours are dry. This family is Baha'i and give water to everybody else. They allow everybody else to come and draw water from their well. Now is that generosity or is that justice? To my mind that is justice. You have too much water and you must give that to others. It is your duty. It is only justice. You don't have to think how great and wonderful you are by sacrificing something that belongs to you and giving to others and you are being very generous. Giving is often justice and not generosity. But then if it is generosity then it's also justice.

I want to talk about two other sets of justice. One has to do with sanctity, sincerity, purity and radiance. This other set is a very interesting quality which again interacts with the other qualities of capability and so on and the reason again is that much of this rectitude of truthfulness and trustworthiness can become righteousness easily if there is no purity of motive. The self can appear and again in the development of the quality unless there are some other qualities that modify, very good things can turn round and become terrible. So one can have great rectitude and everything but if there is no love this becomes self-righteousness. If there is no purity and radiance, it becomes self-righteousness and unbearable. You know what Abdu'l-Baha says about

purity. He begins with purity on the physical level of cleanliness. Then you can think of purity in terms of one's quality. You can think of purity in terms of avoiding some of the laws of prohibiting alcohol and drugs and so on. Then purity in terms of chastity and in terms of family life. Purity really at different levels and then relations with others – honesty, all these different manifestations of purity are essential. I just want to read to you one quotation. Look what He says. He says, first in human ways of life you must have purity, then freshness, cleanliness and independence of spirit. He says, first the stream's bed must be cleaned, then make the sweet river waters lead into it. What is the use of trying to bring sweet and crystal water to run over dirty river beds? They get blocked. Purity is very much related with energy. To the degree that we achieve purity, our energy increases. Now think about that a great deal and you will see the connection. Lack of chastity independent of its physical side brings down the level of spiritual energy. It brings down the level of power as you begin to concentrate on things that are unworthy of man. One's spiritual energy becomes dissipated. Spiritual energy when focused empowers you to achieve things. Again this moral purposeful man needs purity, has to strive everyday to achieve higher level of purity. The greatest test and the greatest danger is that as one works hard and strives and endeavours to develop the different qualities and tries to push the ugly face of ego down, then finally it tries to show its ugliest face in terms of pride. I am good and then that ends everything. Remember the story of the father and son. They were praying while everybody else was talking and not paying attention. The son told the father "Father, are we not better than those? The father says "we were until you said so"! O Unless there is the quality of humility, everything that we have said is a waste. Now this humility before anything else has to be humility before God. It is the humility which should come from understanding the greatness of God. Again it goes back and gets connected with all the other

qualities. It modifies them, it gets help from them to love God, to know the greatness of God, to understand His might and therefore to understand our weakness. It is fine for us to be weak.

In this society of ours and in this world all these great psychological theories keep telling us to have confidence in ourselves. Everything that tell us, you are great; you are wonderful, you are as God if you are not a God. Yes, you can do anything – you, you, you, you think of yourself and this is the way they try to bring us to our normal self if we become abnormal. Self confidence is the greatest problem that everyone has in modern society. Well, I would like to know what's wrong in feeling weak, if we are weak. It's wonderful. Truth is truth. We are nothing, we can't do anything, we are not capable, we are very very tiny things in this universe. That is the truth. I mean its not really wonderful but that's the truth. So why deny it? The point is that because of God if we accept our weakness and stop looking at it and look up towards the power of God and the power of divine assistance. He will use us to do all sorts of wonderful things. Now that's the fact. So this trust and this confidence is not so much in us. It is in the power of divine assistance. Our knowledge of weakness is very good. It is with that kind of humility which is again real, it's not false. But real in the sense because it comes from the realization that we are all weak. That we are not anything, but that even when the wind comes, the dust is raised, the sun shines on the dust and those little particles of dust begin to dance and it is in that sunshine, by the will and wind of God, that we can dance.