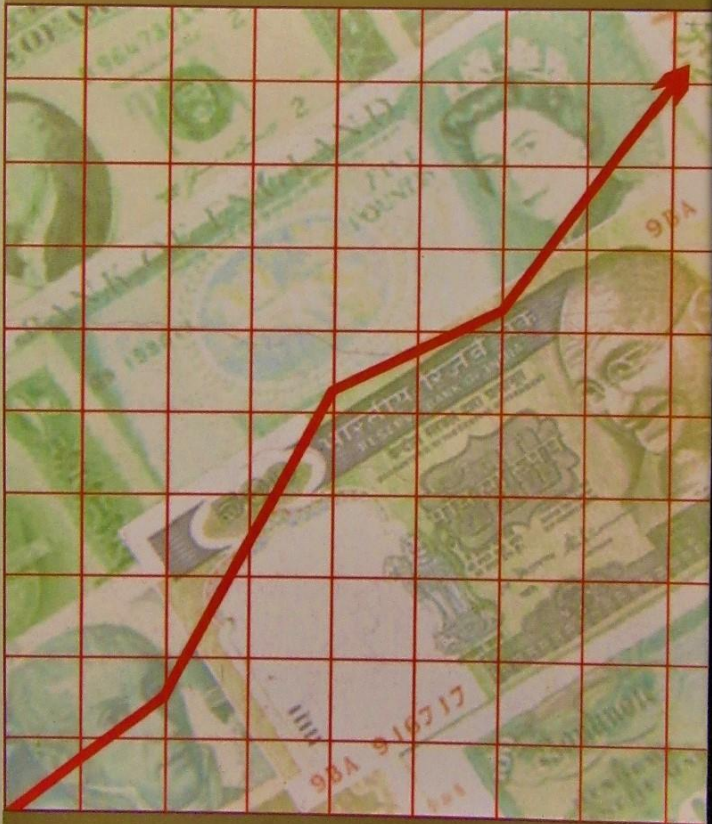


ECONOMICS OF THE FUTURE

A Bahá'í Perspective on



Badi Shams

*A Bahá'í Perspective on the
Economics of the Future*

A compilation from the Bahá'í Writings

by

Badi Shams



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Preface

The collection of writings for this compilation which started in 1979 was intended to be used for my research study on Bahá'í Teachings on Economics". Teachings on this important subject are very scattered in the Bahá'í Writings. I have tried to classify them to the best of my ability, but I find the same very difficult since the guidelines given are very general and putting it under one heading, at times may not look justified.

The economic question in our time is a burning one and never a need for solving the economic problems of the world was felt as it is felt now. No country belonging to any school of economic thought, whether developing or developed, can deny the fact that their main objective is to solve their economic problems.

There was never such a dire need for a better and deeper understanding of the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith on this subject, as more and more people now are eager to find out what solutions are found in the Bahá'í Writings.

It is hoped that after reading these wonderful writings on this subject you can analyze the current economic situation of the world and appreciate what the Bahá'í Faith has to offer.

I have to thank the beloved Universal House of Justice and their Research Department without whose help, guidance and corrections this compilation would have not been in existence.

*Badi Shams
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Application of Economic Teachings to Modern Problems

First we have to study the economic teachings in the light of modern problems more thoroughly so that we may advocate what the Founders of the Faith say and not what we conjecture from Their Writings. There is great difference between sounding a great general principle and finding its application to actual prevailing conditions.

-Shoghi Effendi: Directives of the Guardian, p. 21.

For legal standards, political and economic theories are solely designed to safeguard the interests of humanity as a whole, and not humanity to be crucified for the preservation of the integrity of any particular law or doctrine.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 42.

... the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá do not provide specific and detailed solutions to all such economic questions which mostly pertain to the domain of technical economics, and as such do not concern directly the Cause. True, there are certain guiding principles in Bahá'í Sacred Writings on the subject of economics, but these do by no means cover the whole field of theoretical and applied economics, and are mostly intended to guide further Bahá'í economic writers and technicians to evolve an economic system which would function in full conformity with the spirit and the exact provisions of the Cause on this and similar subjects. The International House of Justice will have, in consultation with economic experts, to assist in the formulation and evolution of the Bahá'í economic system of

the future. One thing, however, is certain that the Cause neither accepts the theories of the Capitalistic economics in full, nor can it agree with the Marxists and Communists in their repudiation of the principle of private ownership and of the vital sacred rights of the individual. -Shoghi Effendi: *Lights of Guidance*, pp. 549–550. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 10 June 1930.)

... the Writings are not so rich on this subject and many issues at present baffling the minds of the world are not even mentioned. The primary consideration is the spirit that has to permeate our economic life and this will gradually crystallize itself into definite institutions and principles that will help to bring about the ideal conditions foretold by Bahá'u'lláh.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 20; and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 550. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, 20 December 1931; *Bahá'í News*, No. 90, March 1935, p. 2.)

Bahá'í World Commonwealth

... inscrutable wisdom designed ultimately to weld the mutually antagonistic elements of human society into a single, organically-united, unshatterable world commonwealth.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Messages to America*, p. 81.

... which [state religion] in turn must give way to its assumption of the rights and prerogatives associated with the Bahá'í state, functioning in the plenitude of its powers, a stage which must ultimately culminate in the emergence of the world-wide Bahá'í Commonwealth,

-Shoghi Effendi: *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 12

... the precautionary and defensive measures to be devised, co-ordinated, and carried out to counteract the full force of the inescapable attacks which the organized efforts of ecclesiastical organizations of various denominations will progressively launch and relentlessly pursue; and, last but not least, the multitudinous issues that must be faced, the obstacles that must be overcome, and the responsibilities that must be assumed, to enable a sore-tried Faith to pass through the successive stages of unmitigated obscurity, of active repression, and of complete emancipation, leading in turn to its being acknowledged as an independent Faith, enjoying the status of full equality with its sister religions, to be followed by its establishment and recognition as a State religion, which in turn must give way to its assumption of the rights and prerogatives associated with the Bahá'í state, functioning in the plenitude of its powers, a stage which must ultimately culminate in the emergence of the world-wide Bahá'í Commonwealth, animated wholly by the spirit, and operating solely in direct conformity with the laws and principles of Bahá'u'lláh.

-Shoghi Effendi: The Advent of Divine Justice, pp. 14–15.

It is the structure of His New World Order, now stirring in the womb of the administrative institutions He Himself has created, that will serve both as a pattern and a nucleus of that world commonwealth which is the sure, the inevitable destiny of the peoples and nations of the earth.

-Shoghi Effendi: The Promised Day is Come, p. 118.

It is the superstructure of that self-same Order, attaining its full stature through the emergence of the Bahá'í World Commonwealth—the Kingdom of God on earth—which the

Golden Age of that same Dispensation must, in the fullness of time, ultimately witness.

-Shoghi Effendi: God Passes By, p. 26.

For as the authority with which Bahá'u'lláh has invested the future Bahá'í Commonwealth becomes more and more apparent, the fiercer shall be the challenge which from every quarter will be thrown at the verities it enshrines.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 18.

And as the Bahá'í Faith permeates the masses of the peoples of East and West, and its truth is embraced by the majority of the peoples of a number of the Sovereign States of the world, will the Universal House of Justice attain the plenitude of its power, and exercise, as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Commonwealth, all the rights, the duties, and responsibilities incumbent upon the world's future super-state.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 7

It [the Monument Gardens—the resting place of the Greatest Holy Leaf on Mount Carmel] marks, too, a further milestone in the road leading eventually to the establishment of that permanent world Administrative Centre of the future Bahá'í Commonwealth, destined never to be separated from, and to function in the proximity of, the Spiritual Centre of that Faith,

-Shoghi Effendi: God Passes By, p. 348.

To us, the “generation of the half-light,” living at a time which may be designated as the period of the incubation of the World Commonwealth envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, has been assigned a task whose high privilege we can never sufficiently appreciate, and the arduousness of which we can as yet but dimly recognize.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 168–69.

... the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is now visibly succeeding in demonstrating its claim and title to be regarded as a World Religion, destined to attain, in the fullness of time, the status of a world-embracing Commonwealth, which would be at once the instrument and the guardian of the Most Great Peace announced by its Author.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 196.

The process of disintegration must inexorably continue, and its corrosive influence must penetrate deeper and deeper into the very core of a crumbling age. Much suffering will still be required ere the contending nations, creeds, classes and races of mankind are fused in the crucible of universal affliction, and are forged by the fires of a fierce ordeal into one organic commonwealth, one vast, unified, and harmoniously functioning system. Adversities unimaginably appalling, undreamed of crises and upheavals, war, famine, and pestilence, might well combine to engrave in the soul of an unheeding generation those truths and principles which it has disdained to recognize and follow.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 193.

... it [The Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States] stands in its final form as a worthy and faithful exposition of the constitutional basis of Bahá'í communities in every land, foreshadowing the final emergence of the world Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future.

-Shoghi Effendi: Bahá'í Administration, p. 135.

This final and crowning stage [World Bahá'í Commonwealth] in the evolution of the plan wrought by God Himself for humanity will, in turn, prove to be the signal for

the birth of a world civilization, incomparable in its range, its character and potency, in the history of mankind

-Shoghi Effendi: Messages to the Bahá'í World, p. 155.

Bahá'í Economic system

There are practically no technical teachings on economics in the Cause, such as banking, the price system, and others. The Cause is not an economic system, nor its Founders be considered as having been technical economists. The contribution of the Faith to this subject is essentially indirect, as it consists of the application of spiritual principles to our present-day economic system. Bahá'u'lláh has given us a few basic principles which should guide future Bahá'í economists in establishing such institutions which will adjust the economic relationships of the world.

-Shoghi Effendi: Directives of the Guardian, p. 20; and Lights of Guidance, p. 551. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 25 January 1936: Bahá'í News, No. 103, October 1936, p. 2)

With regard to your wish for reorganizing your business along Bahá'í lines, Shoghi Effendi deeply appreciates the spirit that has permitted you to make such a suggestion. But he feels nevertheless that the time has not yet come for any believer to bring about such a fundamental change in the economic structure of our society, however restricted may be the field for such an experiment. The economic teachings of the Cause, though well known in their main outline, have not as yet been sufficiently elaborated and systematized to allow anyone to make an exact and thorough application of them even on a restricted scale.

-Shoghi Effendi: Directives of the Guardian, pp. 19–20.

The International House of Justice will have, in consultation with economic experts, to assist in the formulation and evolution of the Bahá'í economic system of the future.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 550. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 10 June 1930: Extracts from the Baha'í Writings on the Subject of Agriculture and Related Subjects, A Compilation of the Universal House of Justice)

... the Writings are not so rich on this subject and many issues at present baffling the minds of the world are not even mentioned. The primary consideration is the spirit that has to permeate our economic life, and this will gradually crystallize itself into definite institutions and principles that will help to bring about the ideal condition foretold by Bahá'u'lláh.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 20; and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 550. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, 20 December 1931: *Bahá'í News*, No. 90, March 1935, p. 2.)

... Bahá'u'lláh did not bring a complete system of economics to the world. Profit sharing is recommended as a solution to one form of economic problems.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 20; and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 551. (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, 19 November 1945: *Bahá'í News*, No. 210, August 1948, p. 3.)

As regards the activities of the economic committee of the National Assembly; Shoghi Effendi fully sympathizes with the desire of some of the members to see the Committee find ways and means to put into practice the economic teachings of the Cause, as explained in some of the recorded Writings and Sayings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master. But he believes that the time is not yet ripe for such activities.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 21.

Divine Economy

Does not the very operation of the world-unifying forces that are at work in this age necessitate that He Who is the Bearer of the Message of God in this day should not only reaffirm that self-same exalted standard of individual conduct inculcated by the Prophets gone before Him, but embody in His appeal, to all governments and peoples, the essentials of that social code, that Divine Economy, which must guide humanity's concerted efforts in establishing that all-embracing federation which is to signalize the advent of the Kingdom of God on this earth?

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá' u'lláh, p. 61.

In like manner are the Bahá'í economic principles the embodiment of the highest aspirations of all wage-earning classes and of economists of various schools.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: Tablet to August Forel, p. 26. Haifa, 21 September 1921.

... By the statement 'the economic solution is divine in nature' is meant that religion alone can, in the last resort, bring in man's nature such a fundamental change as to enable him to adjust the economic relationships of society. It is only in this way that man can control the economic forces that threaten to disrupt the foundations of his existence, and thus assert his mastery over the forces of nature.

-Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, p. 551. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 26 December 1935.)

Economic Resources

The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be coordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

... The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.

-Shoghi Effendi: *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 204.

Praise be to God! A wonderful thing is perceived: the lightning and similar forces are subdued by a conductor, and act by His Command. Exalted is the mighty One who

hath made manifest that which He desired, through His absolute, invincible command!

O people of Bahá! Each one of the revealed commands is a strong fortress for the protection of the world. Verily this oppressed One only wishes your security and elevation.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Bahá'í World Faith, p. 183.

From every standpoint the world of humanity is undergoing a reformation. The laws of former governments and civilizations are in process of revision; scientific ideas and theories are developing and advancing to meet a new range of phenomena; invention and discovery are penetrating hitherto unknown fields, revealing new wonders and hidden secrets of the material universe; industries have vastly wider scope and production; everywhere the world of mankind is in the throes of evolutionary activity indicating the passing of the old conditions and advent of the new age of reformation.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 439. New York, 17 November 1912.

Tariffs and Other Economic Barriers

That a narrow and brutal nationalism, which the post-war theory of self-determination has served to reinforce, has been chiefly responsible for the policy of high and prohibitive tariffs, so injurious to the healthy flow of international trade and to the mechanism of international finance, is a fact which few would venture to dispute.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 35.

A world community in which all economic barriers will have been permanently demolished and the interdependence of Capital and Labour definitely recognized;

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 41.

Economic Adjustment

The fourth principle or teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the readjustment and equalization of the economic standards of mankind. This deals with the question of human livelihood. It is evident that under present systems and conditions of government the poor are subject to the greatest need and distress while others more fortunate live in luxury and plenty far beyond their actual necessities.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 107. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 7 May 1912.

Through the manifestation of God's great equity the poor of the world will be rewarded and assisted fully, and there will be a readjustment in the economic conditions of mankind so that in the future there will not be the abnormally rich nor the abject poor.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 132. Jersey City, New Jersey, 19 May 1912.

The readjustment of the economic laws for the livelihood of man must be effected in order that all humanity may live in the greatest happiness according to their respective degrees.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 170. New York, 2 June 1912.

This readjustment of the social economy is of the greatest importance inasmuch as it ensures the stability of the world of humanity; and until it is effected, happiness and prosperity are impossible.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 181–182. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 9 June 1912.

World Currency

... uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind.

- Shoghi Effendi: *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 203.

Economic Problems

a) The Nature and Causes of Economic Problems

It seems as though all creatures can exist singly and alone. For example, a tree can exist solitary and alone on a given prairie or in a valley or on the mountainside. An animal upon a mountain or a bird soaring in the air might live a solitary life. They are not in need of cooperation or solidarity. Such animated beings enjoy the greatest comfort and happiness in their respective solitary lives.

On the contrary, man cannot live singly and alone. He is in need of continuous cooperation and mutual help. For example, a man living alone in the wilderness will eventually starve. He can never, singly and alone, provide himself with all the necessities of existence. Therefore, he is in need of co-operation and reciprocity. - 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 38.

Although the body politic is one family yet because of lack of harmonious relations some members are comfortable and some in direst misery, some members are satisfied and some are hungry, some members are clothed in most costly garments and some families are in need of food and shelter. Why? Because this family lacks the necessary reciprocity and symmetry. This household is not well arranged. This household is not living under a perfect law. All the laws which are legislated do not ensure happiness. They do not provide comfort. Therefore a law must be given to this family by means of which all the members of this family will enjoy equal well-being and happiness.

Is it possible for one member of a family to be subjected to the utmost misery and to abject poverty and for the rest of the family to be comfortable? It is impossible unless those members of the family be senseless, atrophied, inhospitable, unkind. Then they would say, "Though these members do belong to our family—let them alone.

Such utter indifference in the human family is due to lack of control, to lack of a working law, to lack of kindness in its midst. If kindness had been shown to the members of this family surely all the members thereof would have enjoyed comfort and happiness.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, pp. 38.

Now the root cause of these difficulties lies in the law of nature that governs present-day civilization, for it results in a handful of people accumulating vast fortunes that far exceed their needs, while the greater number remain naked, destitute, and helpless.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 315.

The body of the human world is sick. Its remedy and healing will be the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. Its life is the Most Great Peace. Its illumination and quickening is love.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 19. New York, 16 April 1912.

Economic plans of reconstruction have been carefully devised, and meticulously executed. And yet crisis has succeeded crisis, and the rapidity with which a perilously unstable world is declining has been correspondingly accelerated. A yawning gulf threatens to involve in one common disaster both the satisfied and dissatisfied nations, democracies and dictatorships, capitalists and wage-earners, Europeans and Asiatics, Jew and Gentile, white and coloured.

- Shoghi Effendi: *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 190.

b) The Solution to Economic Problems

The fundamentals of the whole economic condition are divine in nature and are associated with the world of the heart and spirit. This is fully explained in the Bahá'í teaching, and without knowledge of its principles no improvement in the economic state can be realized.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 238. Boston, Massachusetts, 23 July 1912.

The Bahá'í Cause covers all economic and social questions under the heading and ruling of its laws. The essence of the Bahá'í spirit is that, in order to establish a better social order and economic condition, there must be allegiance to the laws and principles of government.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 238. Boston, Massachusetts, 23 July 1912.

'Abdu'l-Bahá ... has said: "All economic problems may be solved by the application of the Science of the Love of God." That is to say: if the Rule called golden and treated as if it were leaden (Worse: for lead has its uses but so far as one may determine, the Golden Rule has been laid on a shelf whose dust is seldom disturbed.)—if that Rule were actually applied to the world's economic problems, which if not solved bid fair to destroy us, and the love of God, the sort of love which makes a home life happy, were used as a scientific measurement to regulate our international and national affairs; to settle all relations between labour and capital, between rich and poor: to regulate all coinage and commerce, can there be any doubt that the results would be far more conducive to human welfare than our present policies have produced?

-Howard Colby Ives: Portals to Freedom, p. 156.

Role of Governments in Economic Affairs

Subject to their approval a place should be fixed where they would meet. There they should hold fast to the cord of consultation and adopt and enforce that which is conducive to the security, prosperity, wealth and tranquillity of the people.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 92–93.

It is incumbent upon the Trustees of the House of Justice to take counsel together regarding those things which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book, and to enforce that which is agreeable to them.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 68; and quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 23.

All the governments of the world must be united and organize an assembly the members of which should be elected from the parliaments and the nobles of the nations. These must plan with utmost wisdom and power so that neither the capitalist suffer from enormous losses nor the labourers become needy. In the utmost moderation they should make the law; then announce to the public that the rights of the working people are to be strongly preserved. Also the rights of the capitalists are to be protected. When such a general plan is adopted by the will of both sides, should a strike occur, all the governments of the world collectively should resist it. Otherwise, the labour problem will lead to much destruction,

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 43.

The intervention of the government and the courts in the problems arising between owners and workers is fully warranted, since these are not such particular matters as are ordinary transactions between two individuals, which do not concern the public and in which the government should have no right to interfere. For problems between owners and workers, though they may appear to be a private matter, are detrimental to the common good, since the commercial, industrial, and agricultural affairs, and even the general business of the nation, are all intimately linked together. An impairment to one is a loss to all. And since the problems between owners and workers are detrimental to the common good, the government and the courts have therefore the right to intervene.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 318-319

A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá' u'lláh, p. 204.

This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. A mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve centre of a world civilization, the focus towards which the

unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 203.

Man—Not a Mere Factor in Production

Lofty is the station of man, were he to hold fast to righteousness and truth and to remain firm and steadfast in the Cause. In the eyes of the All-Merciful a true man appeareth even as a firmament; its sun and moon are his sight and hearing, and his shining and resplendent character its stars. His is the loftiest station, and his influence educateth the world of being.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 220.

Man possesses conscious intelligence and reflection; nature does not. This is an established fundamental among philosophers. Man is endowed with volition and memory; nature has neither. Man can seek out the mysteries latent in nature, whereas nature is not conscious of her own hidden phenomena. Man is progressive; nature is stationary, without the power of progression or retrogression. Man is endowed with ideal virtues—for example, intellection, volition, faith, confession and acknowledgement of God—while nature is devoid of all these. The ideal faculties of man, including the capacity for scientific acquisition, are beyond nature's ken. These are powers whereby man is differentiated and distinguished from all other forms of life.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 51. Washington, D.C., 23 April 1912.

Equality

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.*

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Arabic No. 68.

*Likewise with regard to the party of 'equality' which seeks
the solution of the economic problems: until now all
proposed solutions have proved impracticable except the
economic proposals in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh which
are practicable and cause no distress to society.*

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 305.

*But in the divine teachings equality is brought about through
a ready willingness to share. It is commanded as regards
wealth that the rich among the people, and the aristocrats
should, by their own free will and for the sake of their own
happiness, concern themselves with and care for the poor.
This equality is the result of the lofty characteristics and
noble attributes of mankind.*

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 44.

Now the remedy [inequality of wealth] must be carefully undertaken. It cannot be done by bringing to pass absolute equality between men.

Equality is a chimera! It is entirely impracticable! Even if equality could be achieved it could not continue—and if its existence were possible, the whole order of the world would be destroyed. The law of order must always obtain in the world of humanity. Heaven has so decreed in the creation of man.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, pp. 151–152.

One must therefore enact such laws and regulations as will moderate the excessive fortunes of the few and meet the basic needs of the myriad millions of the poor, that a degree of moderation may be achieved. However, absolute equality is just as untenable, for complete equality in wealth, power, commerce, agriculture, and industry would result in chaos and disorder, disrupt livelihoods, provoke universal discontent, and undermine the orderly conduct of the affairs of the community. For unjustified equality is also fraught with peril. It is preferable, then, that some measure of moderation be achieved, and by moderation is meant the enactment of such laws and regulations as would prevent the unwarranted concentration of wealth in the hands of the few and satisfy the essential needs of the many. For instance, the factory owners reap a fortune every day, but the wage the poor workers are paid cannot even meet their daily needs. This is most unfair, and assuredly no just man can accept it.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 316.

Different Degrees and Capacities of Man

Nevertheless, there will be preservation of degree because in the world of humanity there must needs be degrees. The body politic may well be likened to an army. In this army there must be a general, there must be a sergeant, there must be a marshal, there must be the infantry; but all must enjoy the greatest comfort and welfare.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Foundations of World Unity, p. 41.

The arrangements of the circumstances of the people must be such that poverty shall disappear, that everyone, as far as possible, according to his rank and position, shall share in comfort and well-being.

We see amongst us men who are overburdened with riches on the one hand, and on the other those unfortunate ones who starve with nothing; those who possess several stately palaces, and those who have not where to lay their head. Some we find with numerous courses of costly and dainty food; whilst others can scarce find sufficient crusts to keep them alive. Whilst some are clothed in velvets, furs and fine linen, others have insufficient, poor and thin garments with which to protect them from the cold.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Paris Talks, p. 151.

Some are full of intelligence, others have an ordinary amount of it, and others again are devoid of intellect. In these three classes of men there is order but not equality. How could it be possible that wisdom and stupidity should

be equal? Humanity, like a great army, requires a general, captains, under-officers in their degree, and soldiers, each with their own appointed duties. Degrees are absolutely necessary to ensure an orderly organization. An army could not be composed of generals alone, or of captains only, or of nothing but soldiers without one in authority. The certain result of such a plan would be that disorder and demoralization would overtake the whole army.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Paris Talks, p. 152.

The essence of the matter is that divine justice will become manifest in human conditions and affairs, and all mankind will find comfort and enjoyment in life. It is not meant that all will be equal, for inequality in degree and capacity is a property of nature. Necessarily there will be rich people and also those who will be in want of their livelihood, but in the aggregate community there will be equalization and readjustment of values and interests.

-Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 132. Jersey City, New Jersey, 19 May 1912.

For the community needs financier, farmer, merchant and labourer just as an army must be composed of commander, officers and privates. All cannot be commanders; all cannot be officers or privates. Each in his station in the social fabric must be competent—each in his function according to ability but with justness of opportunity for all.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 216. New York, 1 July 1912.

When the laws He has instituted are carried out, there will be no millionaires possible in the community and likewise no extremely poor. This will be effected and regulated by adjusting the different degrees of human capacity.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 217. New York, 1 July 1912.

Social inequality is the inevitable outcome of the natural inequality of man. Human beings are different in ability and should, therefore, be different in their social and economic standing. Extremes of wealth and poverty should, however, be abolished

-Shoghi Effendi: Directives of the Guardian, p. 20

Professions and Crafts

a) Work and Professions

... Whatever the progress of the machinery may be, man will have always to toil in order to earn his living. Effort is an inseparable part of man's life. It may take different forms with the changing conditions of the world, but it will be always present as a necessary element in our earthly existence. Life is after all a struggle. Progress is attained through struggle, and without such a struggle life ceases to have a meaning; it becomes even extinct. The progress of machinery has not made effort unnecessary. It has given it a new form, a new outlet.

-Shoghi Effendi: Lights of Guidance, p. 551. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 26, 1935.)

It is enjoined upon every one of you to engage in some form of occupation, such as crafts, trades and the like. We have graciously exalted your engagement in such work to the rank of worship unto God, the True One. Ponder ye in your

hearts the grace and the blessings of God and render thanks unto Him at eventide and at dawn. Waste not your time in idleness and sloth. Occupy yourselves with that which profiteth yourselves and others. Thus hath it been decreed in this Tablet from whose horizon the day-star of wisdom and utterance shineth resplendent.

The most despised of men in the sight of God are those who sit idly and beg. Hold ye fast unto the cord of material means, placing your whole trust in God, the Provider of all means. When anyone occupieth himself in a craft or trade, such occupation itself is regarded in the estimation of God as an act of worship; and this is naught but a token of His infinite and all-pervasive bounty.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 26.

*With reference to Bahá'u'lláh's command concerning the engagement of the believers in some sort of profession; the teachings are most emphatic on this matter, particularly the statement in the *Aqdas* to this effect which makes it quite clear that idle people who lack the desire to work can have no place in the new World Order. As a corollary of this principle, Bahá'u'lláh further states that mendicity should not only be discouraged but entirely wiped out from the face of society. It is the duty of those who are in charge of the organization of society to give every individual the opportunity of acquiring the necessary talent in some kind of profession, and also the means of utilizing such a talent, both for its own sake and for the sake of earning the means of his livelihood. Every individual, no matter how handicapped and limited he may be, is under the obligation of engaging in some work or profession, for work, especially when performed in the spirit of service, is according to*

Bahá'u'lláh, a form of worship. It has not only a utilitarian purpose, but has a value in itself, because it draws us nearer to God, and enables us to better grasp His purpose for us in this world. It is obvious, therefore, that the inheritance of wealth cannot make anyone immune from daily work.

-Shoghi Effendi: Directives of the Guardian, pp. 82-83

O MY SERVANTS!

Ye are the trees of My garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent on every one to engage in crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of wealth, O men of understanding! For results depend upon means, and the grace of God shall be all-sufficient unto you. Trees that yield no fruit have been and will ever be for the fire.

O MY SERVANTS!

The basest of men are they that yield no fruit on earth. Such men are verily counted as among the dead, nay better are the dead in the sight of God than those idle and worthless souls.

O MY SERVANT!

The best of men are they that earn a livelihood by their calling and spend upon themselves and upon their kindred for the love of God, the Lord of all worlds.

-Bahá'u'lláh: The Hidden Words, Persian Nos. 80-82.

Having attained the stage of fulfilment and reached his maturity, man standeth in need of wealth, and such wealth as he acquireth through crafts or professions is

commendable and praiseworthy in the estimation of men of wisdom, and especially in the eyes of servants who dedicate themselves to the education of the world and to the edification of its peoples.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 35.

b) Arts and Crafts

The people of Bahá should not deny any soul the reward due to him, should treat craftsmen with deference, and, unlike the people aforesaid, should not defile their tongues with abuse.

In this Day the sun of craftsmanship shineth above the horizon of the occident and the river of arts is flowing out of the sea of that region. One must speak with fairness and appreciate such bounty. -Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 38-39.

The third Tajalli [effulgence] is concerning arts, crafts and sciences. Knowledge is as wings to man's life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone. The knowledge of such sciences, however, should be acquired as can profit the peoples of the earth, and not those which begin with words and end with words. Great indeed is the claim of scientists and craftsmen on the peoples of the world.

Agriculture and the Farmer

To solve this problem [economics] we must begin with the farmer; there will we lay a foundation for system and order because the peasant class and the agricultural class exceed other classes in the importance of their service.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 39.

The question of economics must commence with the farmer and then be extended to the other classes inasmuch as the number of farmers is greater than all other classes, many many times greater. Therefore, it is fitting that the economic problem be first solved with the farmer, for the farmer is the first active agent in the body politic. In brief, from among the wise men in every village a board should be organized and the affairs of that village should be under the control of that board.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 548. (Extract from a Tablet to an individual believer, 4 October 1912, translation corrected in the World Centre, December 1985.)

Special regard must be paid to agriculture. Although it hath been mentioned in the fifth place, unquestionably it precedeth the others. -Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 90.

Of course conditions in the East differ where the Countries are rarely industrial and mostly agricultural we should have to apply different laws from the West and that is why the principles of the Movement strike at the root which is common to them both. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has developed in various of His talks, which you will find in different compilations, the principles upon which the Bahá'í

economic system would be based. A system that prevents among others the gradual control of wealth in the hands of a few and the resulting state of both extremes, wealth and poverty.

-Shoghi Effendi: Lights of Guidance, p. 549. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 28 October 1927: Extracts from the Bahá'í Writings on the Subject of Agriculture and Related Subjects, A Compilation of the Universal House of Justice.)

As to your fourth question, Shoghi Effendi believes that it is preferable not to confuse the methods explained by the Master with present systems. They may have many resemblances but also many points of difference. Moreover these general statements we have in the teachings have to be explained and applied by the House of Justice before we can really appreciate their significance.

-Shoghi Effendi: Lights of Guidance, p. 549. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 21 October 1932: Extracts from the Bahá'í Writings on the Subject of Agriculture and Related Subjects, A Compilation of the Universal House of Justice.)

Capitalist and Capitalism

If it be right for a capitalist to possess a large fortune, it is equally just that his workman should have a sufficient means of existence.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: Paris Talks, p. 153.

... the best course is to seek moderation, which is for the wealthy to recognize the advantages of moderation in the acquisition of profits and to show regard for the welfare of the poor and the needy, that is, to fix a daily wage for the

workers and also to allot them a share of the total profits of the factory - 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 318.

There is nothing in the teachings against some kind of capitalism; its present form, though, would require adjustments to be made.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 20; and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 551. (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, 19 November 1945: *Bahá'í News*, No. 210, August 1948, p. 3.)

Workmen and Industry

a) Factory—Labourers and Workmen

Laws must be made because it is impossible for the labourers to be satisfied with the present system. They will strike every month and every year. Finally, the capitalists will lose.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 44.

... insofar as the mutual rights of the factory owners and the workers are concerned, laws must be enacted that would enable the former to make reasonable profits and the latter to be provided with their present necessities and their future needs,

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 318.

For their part, the workers should not make excessive demands, be recalcitrant, ask for more than they deserve, or go on strike. They should obey and comply and make no demands for exorbitant wages. Rather, the mutual and

equitable rights of both parties should be officially fixed and established

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 318.

b) Factory—Shares and Profits

... to fix a daily wage for the workers and also to allot them a share of the total profits of the factory.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 318.

Also, every factory that has ten thousand shares will give two thousand shares of these ten thousand to its employees and will write the shares in their names, so that they may have them, and the rest will belong to the capitalists. Then at the end of the month or year whatever they may earn after the expenses and wages are paid, according to the number of shares, should be divided among both.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 43.

Wages

In brief, insofar as the mutual rights of the factory owners and the workers are concerned, laws must be enacted that would enable the former to make reasonable profits and the latter to be provided with their present necessities and their future needs, so that if they become incapacitated, grow old, or die and leave behind small children, they or their children will not be overcome by dire poverty but will receive a modest pension from the revenues of the factory itself.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p 318.

For instance, the owners of properties, mines and factories should share their incomes with their employees and give a fairly certain percentage of their products to their workmen in order that the employees may receive, beside their wages, some of the general income of the factory so that the employee may strive with his soul in the work.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 43.

The Master has definitely stated that wages should be unequal, simply because that men are unequal in their ability and hence should receive wages that would correspond to their varying capacities and resources.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 20; and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 551. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 26 December 1935.)

This view [refer to previous paragraph] seems to contradict the opinion of some modern economists. But the friends should have full confidence in the words of the Master, and should give preference to His statements over those voiced by our so-called modern thinkers.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 551. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 26 December 1935.)

Representatives of the Wage-earning Classes

... in the industrial world, where the representatives of the wage-earning classes, either through violence or persuasion, are capturing the seats of authority and wielding the sceptre of power: in the field of religion, where we have lately witnessed widespread and organized attempts

to broaden and simplify the basis of man's faith, to achieve unity in Christendom and restore the regenerating vigour of Islám; in the heart of society itself, where the ominous signs of increasing extravagance and profligacy are but lending fresh impetus to the forces of revolt and reaction that are growing more distinct every day—in these as in many others we have much cause for alarm, but much to be hopeful and thankful for also.

-Shoghi Effendi: Bahá'í Administration, p. 146.

Trade Unions

Regarding your question about trade unions: The Guardian considers that this is a matter for each National Spiritual Assembly to advise the believers on. As long as the trade unions are not members of any particular political party, there does not seem to be any objection to the Bahá'ís belonging to them.

-Shoghi Effendi: Lights of Guidance, p. 628. (From the Guardian's secretary in a letter written on his behalf dated 2 February 1951.)

Retirement

As to the question of retirement from work for individuals who have reached a certain age, this is a matter on which the International House of Justice will have to legislate as there are no provisions in the Aqdas concerning it.

-Shoghi Effendi: Directives of the Guardian, p. 83; and Lights of Guidance, p. 626. (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, 22 March 1937: Principles of Bahá'í Administration, p. 12.)

Even though you are 79 years old, that does not seem in your case to be any handicap; and in this Cause, as the Guardian has told us there is work for everyone of some sort, of whatever age he or she may be.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 626. (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, 23 August 1954: cited by the Universal House of Justice, 14 December 1970.)

Pensions

Therefore, laws and regulations should be enacted which would grant the workers both a daily wage and a share in a fourth or fifth of the profits of the factory in accordance with its means, or which would have the workers equitably share in some other way in the profits with the owners. For the capital and the management come from the latter and the toil and labour from the former. The workers could either be granted a wage that adequately meets their daily needs, as well as a right to a share in the revenues of the factory when they are injured, incapacitated, or unable to work, or else a wage could be set that allows the workers to both satisfy their daily needs and save a little for times of weakness and incapacity.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 317

Strikes

You have asked about strikes. Great difficulties have arisen and will continue to arise from this issue. The origin of these

difficulties is twofold: One is the excessive greed and rapacity of the factory owners, and the other is the gratuitous demands, the greed, and the intransigence of the workers. One must therefore seek to address both.

Now, the root cause of these difficulties lies in the law of nature that governs present-day civilization, for it results in a handful of people accumulating vast fortunes that far exceed their needs, while the greater number remain naked, destitute, and helpless. This is at once contrary to justice, to humanity, and to fairness; it is the very height of inequity and runs counter to the good-pleasure of the All-Merciful.

This disparity is confined to the human race: Among other creatures, that is, among the animals, a certain kind of justice and equality prevails. Thus there is equality within a shepherd's flock, or within a herd of deer in the wilderness, or among the songbirds that dwell in the mountains, plains, and orchards. The animals of every species enjoy a measure of equality and do not differ greatly from one another in their means of existence, and thus they live in perfect peace and joy.

It is quite otherwise with the human race, where the greatest oppression and injustice are to be found. Thus you can observe, on the one hand, a single person who has amassed a fortune, made an entire country his personal dominion, acquired immense wealth, and secured an unceasing flow of gains and profits, and, on the other, a hundred thousand helpless souls—weak, powerless, and wanting even a mouthful of bread. There is neither equality here nor benevolence. Observe how, as a result, general peace and

happiness have become so wanting, and the welfare of humanity so undermined, that the lives of a vast multitude have been rendered fruitless! For all the wealth, power, commerce, and industry are concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, while all others toil under the burden of endless hardships and difficulties, are bereft of advantages and benefits, and remain deprived of comfort and peace. One must therefore enact such laws and regulations as will moderate the excessive fortunes of the few and meet the basic needs of the myriad millions of the poor, that a degree of moderation may be achieved.

However, absolute equality is just as untenable, for complete equality in wealth, power, commerce, agriculture, and industry would result in chaos and disorder, disrupt livelihoods, provoke universal discontent, and undermine the orderly conduct of the affairs of the community. For unjustified equality is also fraught with peril. It is preferable, then, that some measure of moderation be achieved, and by moderation is meant the enactment of such laws and regulations as would prevent the unwarranted concentration of wealth in the hands of the few and satisfy the essential needs of the many. For instance, the factory owners reap a fortune every day, but the wage the poor workers are paid cannot even meet their daily needs: This is most unfair, and assuredly no just man can accept it. Therefore, laws and regulations should be enacted which would grant the workers both a daily wage and a share in a fourth or fifth of the profits of the factory in accordance with its means, or which would have the workers equitably share in some other way in the profits with the owners. For the capital and the management come from the latter and the

toil and labour from the former. The workers could either be granted a wage that adequately meets their daily needs, as well as a right to a share in the revenues of the factory when they are injured, incapacitated, or unable to work, or else a wage could be set that allows the workers to both satisfy their daily needs and save a little for times of weakness and incapacity.

If matters were so arranged, neither would the factory owners amass each day a fortune which is absolutely of no use to them—for should one's fortune increase beyond measure, one would come under a most heavy burden, become subject to exceeding hardships and troubles, and find the administration of such an excessive fortune to be most difficult and to exhaust one's natural powers—nor would the workers endure such toil and hardship as to become incapacitated and to fall victim, at the end of their lives, to the direst need.

It is therefore clearly established that the appropriation of excessive wealth by a few individuals, notwithstanding the needs of the masses, is unfair and unjust, and that, conversely, absolute equality would also disrupt the existence, welfare, comfort, peace, and orderly life of the human race. Such being the case, the best course is therefore to seek moderation, which is for the wealthy to recognize the advantages of moderation in the acquisition of profits and to show regard for the welfare of the poor and the needy, that is, to fix a daily wage for the workers and also to allot them a share of the total profits of the factory.

In brief, insofar as the mutual rights of the factory owners and the workers are concerned, laws must be enacted that would enable the former to make reasonable profits and the latter to be provided with their present necessities and their future needs, so that if they become incapacitated, grow old, or die and leave behind small children, they or their children will not be overcome by dire poverty but will receive a modest pension from the revenues of the factory itself.

For their part, the workers should not make excessive demands, be recalcitrant, ask for more than they deserve, or go on strike. They should obey and comply and make no demands for exorbitant wages. Rather, the mutual and equitable rights of both parties should be officially fixed and established according to the laws of justice and compassion, and any party that violates them should be condemned after a fair hearing and be subject to a definitive verdict enforced by the executive branch, so that all affairs may be appropriately ordered and all problems adequately resolved.

The intervention of the government and the courts in the problems arising between owners and workers is fully warranted, since these are not such particular matters as are ordinary transactions between two individuals, which do not concern the public and in which the government should have no right to interfere. For problems between owners and workers, though they may appear to be a private matter, are detrimental to the common good, since the commercial, industrial, and agricultural affairs, and even the general business of the nation, are all intimately linked together: An

impairment to one is a loss to all. And since the problems between owners and workers are detrimental to the common good, the government and the courts have therefore the right to intervene.

Even in the case of differences that arise between two individuals with regard to particular rights, a third party, namely the government, is needed to resolve the dispute. How, then, can the problem of strikes, which entirely disrupt the country—whether they arise from the inordinate demands of the workers or the excessive greed of the factory owners—remain neglected?

Gracious God! How can one see one's fellow men hungry, destitute, and deprived, and yet live in peace and comfort in one's splendid mansion? How can one see others in the greatest need and yet take delight in one's fortune? That is why it has been decreed in the divine religions that the wealthy should offer up each year a portion of their wealth for the sustenance of the poor and the assistance of the needy. This is one of the foundations of the religion of God and is an injunction binding upon all. And since in this regard one is not outwardly compelled or obliged by the government, but rather aids the poor at the prompting of one's own heart and in a spirit of joy and radiance, such a deed is most commendable, approved, and pleasing.

This is the meaning of the righteous deeds mentioned in the heavenly Books and Scriptures.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Some Answered Questions, pp. 315-320

Today the method of demand is the strike and resort to force, which is manifestly wrong and destructive of human foundations. Rightful privilege and demand must be set forth in laws and regulations.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 238. Boston, Massachusetts, 23 July 1912.

Socialization

The question of socialization is very important. It will not be solved by strikes for wages.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 43.

Unemployment

That inter-governmental debts have imposed a severe strain on the masses of the people in Europe, have upset the equilibrium of national budgets, have crippled national industries, and led to an increase in the number of the unemployed, is no less apparent to an unprejudiced observer.

- Shoghi Effendi: *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 35.

Industrial Slavery

“Between 1860 and 1865 you did a wonderful thing; you abolished chattel slavery; but today you must do a much more wonderful thing: you must destroy ‘industrial slavery’ ...”

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Star of the West, Vol. VII, No. 15, p. 147. Quoted by J. E. Esselmont in Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era, Industrial Slavery section, p. 137.

Science and technology

Science cannot create amity and fellowship in human hearts.

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 171. New York, 8 June 1912.

The development and progress of a nation is according to the measure and degree of that nation’s scientific attainments. Through this means its greatness is continually increased, and day by day the welfare and prosperity of its people are assured.

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 49. Washington, D.C., 23 April 1912.

A scientific man is a true index and representative of humanity, for through processes of inductive reasoning and research he is informed of all that appertains to humanity, its status, conditions and happenings. He studies the human body politic, understands social problems and weaves the web and texture of civilization. In fact, science may be likened to a mirror wherein the infinite forms and images of

existing things are revealed and reflected. It is the very foundation of all individual and national development. Without this basis of investigation, development is impossible.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 50. Washington, D.C., 23 April 1912.

Use of Technical Knowledge

According to some accounts, mankind has been directed to borrow various good qualities and ways from wild animals, and to learn a lesson from these. Since it is permissible to imitate virtues of dumb animals, it is certainly far more so to borrow material sciences and techniques from foreign peoples, who at least belong to the human race and are distinguished by judgement and the power of speech. And if it be contended that such praiseworthy qualities are inborn in animals, by what proof can they claim that these essential principles of civilization, this knowledge and these sciences current among other peoples, are not inborn?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 30.

It has now been clearly and irrefutably shown that the importation from foreign countries of the principles and procedures of civilization, and the acquisition from them of sciences and techniques—in brief, of whatsoever will contribute to the general good—is entirely permissible.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 31–32.

Can we maintain that it is contrary to the fundamentals of the Faith to encourage the acquisition of useful arts and of general knowledge, to inform oneself as to the truths of such

physical sciences as are beneficial to man, and to widen the scope of industry and increase the products of commerce and multiply the nation's avenues of wealth? Would it conflict with the worship of God to establish law and order in the cities and organize the rural districts, to repair the roads and build railroads and facilitate transportation and travel and thus increase the people's well-being? Would it be inconsistent with the Divine commands and prohibitions if we were to work the abandoned mines which are the greatest source of the nation's wealth, and to build factories, from which come the entire people's comfort, security and affluence? Or to stimulate the creation of new industries and to promote improvements in our domestic products?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 101–102.

One should regard the other technological advances, sciences, arts and political formulae of proven usefulness in the same light—i.e., those procedures which, down the ages, have time and again been put to the test and whose many uses and advantages have demonstrably resulted in the glory and greatness of the state, and the well-being and progress of the people. Should all these be abandoned, for no valid reason, and other methods of reform be attempted, by the time such reforms might eventuate, and their advantages might be put to proof, many years would go by, and many lives.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 113–114.

Wastage on Wars

Peace is the pretext, and night and day they are all straining every nerve to pile up more weapons of war, and to pay for this their wretched people must sacrifice most of whatever they are able to earn by their sweat and toil. How many thousands have given up their work in useful industries and are labouring day and night to produce new and deadlier weapons which would spill out the blood of the race more copiously than before.

Each day they invent a new bomb or explosive and then the governments must abandon their obsolete arms and begin producing the new, since the old weapons cannot hold their own against the new.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 61–62.

Observe that if such a happy situation be forthcoming, no government would need continually to pile up the weapons of war, nor feel itself obliged to produce ever new military weapons with which to conquer the human race. A small force for the purposes of internal security, the correction of criminal and disorderly elements and the prevention of local disturbances, would be required—no more. In this way the entire population would, first of all, be relieved of the crushing burden of expenditure currently imposed for military purposes, and secondly, great numbers of people would cease to devote their time to the continual devising of new weapons of destruction

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 65–66.

It is incumbent upon the ministers of the House of Justice to promote the Lesser Peace so that the people of the earth may be relieved from the burden of exorbitant expenditures. This matter is imperative and absolutely essential, inasmuch

as hostilities and conflict lie at the root of affliction and calamity.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 89.

... fathers, mothers, children in grief and lamentation, the foundations of life overturned, cities laid waste and fertile lands made desolate by the ravages of war. These conditions are the outcome of hostility and hatred between nations and peoples of religion who imitate and adhere to the forms and violate the spirit and reality of the divine teachings.

-Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 439, New York, 17 November 1912

If two nations were at war in olden times, ten or twenty thousand would be sacrificed, but in this century the destruction of one hundred thousand lives in a day is quite possible. So perfected has the science of killing become and so efficient the means and instruments of its accomplishment that a whole nation can be obliterated in a short time.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 123–124. New York, 13 May 1912.

... the vast and ever-swelling army of the unemployed with its crushing burden and demoralizing influence on governments and peoples; the wicked, unbridled race of armaments swallowing an ever-increasing share of the substance of already impoverished nations;

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 32.

That the spirit of vindictiveness, of suspicion, of fear and rivalry, engendered by the war, and which the provisions of the Peace Treaties have served to perpetuate and foster, has led to an enormous increase of national competitive armaments, involving during the last year the aggregate expenditure of no less than a thousand million pounds, which in turn has accentuated the effects of the world-wide

depression, is a truth that even the most superficial observer will readily admit.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p 35.

The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 204.

Storehouses and Taxation

a) Village Storehouses

The solution begins with the village, and when the village is reconstructed, then the cities will be also. The idea is this, that in each village will be erected a storehouse. In the

language of Religion it is called the House of Finance. That is a universal storehouse, which is commenced in the village. Its administration is through a committee of the wise ones of the community, and with the approval of that committee all the affairs are directed.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Quoted by George Orr Latimer in *Light of the World*, 1920, p. 47; and *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. IV, p. 450.

In brief, from among the wise men in every village a board should be organized and the affairs of that village should be under the control of that board.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 548. (Extract from a Tablet to an individual believer, 4 October 1912, translation corrected in the World Centre, December 1985.)

Likewise a general storehouse should be founded with the appointment of a secretary. At the time of the harvest, with the approval of the members of that board, a determined percentage of the entire harvest should be appropriated for the storehouse.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 548. (Extract from a Tablet to an individual believer, 4 October 1912, translation corrected in the World Centre, December 1985.)

The board of the house of finance (storehouse) will direct in every village the revenues of the house such as tithes, tax on animals, etc. In every village a storehouse and an officer-in-charge are to be provided while the notables of the village gather and form a board and to this board and officer the direction of the affairs of the village are entrusted. They take charge of all the questions pertaining to the village and the revenues of the storehouse such as tithes, tax on animals and other revenues are gathered in it and are given out for necessary expenditures.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá dated 25 July 1919, to an individual believer, sent by the Universal House of Justice to the compiler.

b) City Storehouses

For larger cities, naturally, there will be a system on a larger scale. Were I to go into that solution the details thereof would be very lengthy.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 41.

c) Storehouse Revenues

The storehouse is to have seven revenues: Tithes, taxes on animals, wealth without inheritors, all things found whose owners cannot be discovered, a third of all treasures (money) found in the earth, a third of the mines, and voluntary contributions.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 548. (Extract from a Tablet to an individual believer, dated 4 October, 1912, translation corrected in the World Centre, December 1985)

As to the revenues of the storehouse, the House of justice must strive by every means possible to increase that amount, i.e. by every just means.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá dated 25 July 1919, to an individual believer, sent by the Universal House of Justice to the compiler.

First, whatever contributions are necessary, they obtain from the bank at interest. For instance, they borrow from the bank at three per cent and loan to the public at four per cent. Any farmer who is in need of implements, they supply and give him all his necessities. When the crop is harvested, it will be the first income (of the store-house). The first revenue is this. But this revenue is not equally distributed. For instance, a person may have a crop of one thousand

kilos and this is only sufficient for his wants and living. From him nothing will be taken because he needs it all. If something is taken from him, he will remain hungry. But again, there may be one whose needs require one thousand kilos and his income is two thousand kilos. From him one-tenth is taken. Again, one needs two thousand kilos, but his income is ten thousand kilos. From him two-tenths will be taken. He needs two thousand kilos. If two thousand are taken from him he still has six thousand remaining. One has fifty thousand kilos, from him one-third is taken. One may have ten thousand kilos expenses, but has one hundred thousand kilos income. One-half is taken. The greater the income, the greater is the ratio (of taxation).

Second: It is also the same with the cattle. They take proportionately the revenue from the cattle. For example, if a man has two cows necessary for his wants, nothing is taken from him. The more he has, the more is taken from him. This is the second revenue.

The third revenue of the store-house comes from one who dies without heirs.

The fourth revenue comes from mines. If a mine is found upon the land of a person, one-third of it belongs to him and the remainder to the store-house.

The fifth revenue is hidden treasure. If a person finds a hidden treasure (in the earth) he takes half of it, and the other half goes to the store-house.

The sixth revenue. If it (treasure) is found on the way, also half of it belongs to the store-house.

The seventh revenue is voluntary contributions. Of their own free will and with the utmost willingness, the people will give.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Quoted by George Orr Latimer in Light of the World, 1920. pp. 47–48; and The Bahá'í World, Vol. IV, p. 450.*

d) Storehouse Expenditures

On the other hand, there are seven expenditures:

- 1. General running expenses of the institution—salaries etc., and the administration of public safety, including the department of hygiene.*
- 2. Tithes to the general government (State).*
- 3. Taxes on animals for the State.*
- 4. Support of an orphanage.*
- 5. Support of cripples and the incurable.*
- 6. Support of educational institutions.*
- 7. Supplying any deficiency for the expenses of the poor.*

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Lights of Guidance, pp. 548–549. (Extract from a Tablet to an individual believer, dated 4 October 1912, translation corrected in the World Centre, December 1985.)*

These are the seven revenues, but there are seven fixed expenditures.

The first expenditure: The store-house ought to give one-tenth to the Government, to the public treasury for the public expenses.

The second expenditure is for the poor. The poor who are in need, those who are exempt, not those who are idle. For instance, if a person's crop is burned or he has a loss in his

business, and for this reason has become poor; these poor people are to be taken care of.

Third: The infirm, who come to want and cannot work.

Fourth: The orphans. To them also help must be given.

Fifth: The schools. The schools must be organized for the education of the children.

Sixth: For the deaf and blind.

Seventh: Public health. Whatever is necessary for the public health must be arranged. Swamps should be filled up, water should be brought in; whatever is necessary for the public health. - 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Quoted by George Orr Latimer in *Light of the World*, 1920. pp. 48–49; and *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. IV, pp. 450–451.

e) The National Treasury

If there is something left over (after these expenditures) it should be given to the Great House of Justice. And thus there will be no want in the village. The people will not remain hungry, they will not remain naked. All will be in the utmost welfare and comfort.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Quoted by George Orr Latimer in *Light of the World*, 1920, p. 49.

The farmers will be taken care of and if after all these expenses are defrayed any surplus is found in the storehouse it must be transferred to the national treasury.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 40.

If anything is left in the storehouse, that must be transferred to the general treasury of the nation for general national expenses.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Letter to an individual dated 4 October 1912, sent by the Universal House of Justice to the compiler*

f) Trustees

Certain trustees will be elected by the people in a given village to look after these transactions.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 40.

g) Trusts

No more trusts will remain in the future. The question of the trusts will be wiped away entirely.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 43.

h) Taxation

O kings of the earth! We see you increasing every year your expenditures, and laying the burden thereof on your subjects. This, verily, is wholly and grossly unjust. Fear the sighs and tears of this wronged One, and lay not excessive burdens on your peoples. Do not rob them to rear palaces for yourselves; nay rather choose for them that which ye choose for yourselves.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 253; and *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 12.

As to the first [revenue], the tenths or tithes: we will consider a farmer, one of the peasants. We will look into his

income. We will find out, for instance, what is his annual revenue and also what are his expenditures. Now, if his income be equal to his expenditures, from such a farmer nothing whatever will be taken. That is, he will not be subjected to taxation of any sort, needing as he does all his income. Another farmer may have expenses running up to one thousand dollars we will say, and his income is two thousand dollars. From such an one a tenth will be required, because he has a surplus. But if his income be ten thousand dollars and his expenses one thousand dollars or his income twenty thousand dollars, he will have to pay as taxes, one-fourth. If his income be one hundred thousand dollars and his expenses five thousand, one-third will he have to pay because he has still a surplus since his expenses are five thousand and his income one hundred thousand. If he pays, say, thirty-five thousand dollars, in addition to the expenditure of five thousand he still has sixty thousand left. But if his expenses be ten thousand and his income two hundred thousand then he must give an even half because ninety thousand will be in that case the sum remaining. Such a scale as this will determine allotment of taxes. All the income from such revenues will go to this general storehouse.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Foundations of World Unity, p. 40.

Each person in the community whose need is equal to his individual producing capacity shall be exempt from taxation. But if his income is greater than his needs, he must pay a tax until an adjustment is effected. That is to say, a man's capacity for production and his needs will be equalized and reconciled through taxation. If his production exceeds, he will pay a tax; if his necessities exceed his production, he

shall receive an amount sufficient to equalize or adjust. Therefore, taxation will be proportionate to capacity and production, and there will be no poor in the community.

Bahá'u'lláh, likewise, commanded the rich to give freely to the poor. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas it is further written by Him that those who have a certain amount of income must give one-fifth of it to God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 217. New York, 1 July 1912.

Rate of Interest

Many people stand in need of this. Because if there were no prospect for gaining interest, the affairs of men would suffer collapse or dislocation. One can seldom find a person who would manifest such consideration towards his fellow-man, his countryman or towards his own brother and would show such tender solicitude for him as to be well-disposed to grant him a loan on benevolent terms. [Such loans as bear no interest and are repayable whenever the borrower pleases]. Therefore as a token of favour towards men We have prescribed that interest on money should be treated like other business transactions that are current amongst men. Thus, ... it is lawful and proper to charge interest on money, that the people of the world may, in a spirit of amity and fellowship and with joy and gladness, devotedly engage themselves in magnifying the Name of Him Who is the Well-Beloved of all mankind. ... He hath now made interest on money lawful, even as He had made it unlawful in the past.

....

... However, this is a matter that should be practised with moderation and fairness. ...

Nevertheless the conduct of these affairs hath been entrusted to the men of the House of Justice that they may enforce them according to the exigencies of the time and the dictates of wisdom.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 133–134.

Wealth

Wealth is praiseworthy in the highest degree, if it is acquired by an individual's own efforts and the grace of God, in commerce, agriculture, art and industry, and if it be expended for philanthropic purposes. Above all, if a judicious and resourceful individual should initiate measures which would universally enrich the masses of the people, there could be no undertaking greater than this, and it would rank in the sight of God as the supreme achievement, for such a benefactor would supply the needs and insure the comfort and well-being of a great multitude. Wealth is most commendable, provided the entire population is wealthy. If, however, a few have inordinate riches while the rest are impoverished, and no fruit or benefit accrues from that wealth, then it is only a liability to its possessor. If, on the other hand, it is expended for the promotion of knowledge, the founding of elementary and other schools, the encouragement of art and industry, the training of orphans and the poor—in brief, if it is dedicated to the welfare of society—its possessor will stand out before God

and man as the most excellent of all who live on earth and will be accounted as one of the people of paradise.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Secret of Divine Civilization, pp. 24–25.

a) The Distribution of Wealth

That the financial obligations contracted in the course of the war, as well as the imposition of a staggering burden of reparations upon the vanquished, have, to a very great extent, been responsible for the mal-distribution and consequent shortage of the world's monetary gold supply, which in turn has, to a very great measure, accentuated the phenomenal fall in prices and thereby relentlessly increased the burdens of impoverished countries, no impartial mind would question.

-Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 35.

b) The Limitation of Wealth

Hearts must be so cemented together, love must become so dominant that the rich shall most willingly extend assistance to the poor and take steps to establish these economic adjustments permanently. If it is accomplished in this way, it will be most praiseworthy because then it will be for the sake of God and in the pathway of His service.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 239. Boston, 23 July 1912.

There must be special laws made, dealing with these extremes of riches and of want. The members of the

Government should consider the laws of God when they are framing plans for the ruling of the people. The general rights of mankind must be guarded and preserved.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, pp. 153–154.

The rich too must be merciful to the poor, contributing from willing hearts to their needs without being forced or compelled to do so. - 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 107.

Pittsburgh, 7 May 1912.

The greatest means for prevention is that whereby the laws of the community will be so framed and enacted that it will not be possible for a few to be millionaires and many destitute. One of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings is the adjustment of means of livelihood in human society. Under this adjustment there can be no extremes in human conditions as regards wealth and sustenance.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 216. New York, 1 July 1912.

Social inequality is the inevitable outcome of the natural inequality of man. Human beings are different in ability and should, therefore, be different in their social and economic standing. Extremes of wealth and poverty should, however, be abolished

- Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 20; and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 550. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 26 January 1935.)

Moderation

In all matters moderation is desirable. If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil. Consider the civilization of the West, how it hath agitated and alarmed the peoples of the world. An infernal engine hath been

devised, and hath proved so cruel a weapon of destruction that its like none hath ever witnessed or heard.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 69.

Fear ye God, and take heed not to outstrip the bounds of moderation, and be numbered among the extravagant.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 251.

Welfare

Regarding reciprocity and cooperation: each member of the body politic should live in the utmost comfort and welfare because each individual member of humanity is a member of the body politic and if one member of the members be in distress or be afflicted with some disease all the other members must necessarily suffer.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: Foundations of World Unity, p. 38.

The good pleasure of God consists in the welfare of all the individual members of mankind.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: Foundations of World Unity, p. 41.

Bahá'u'lláh set forth principles of guidance and teaching for economic readjustment. Regulations were revealed by Him which ensure the welfare of the commonwealth.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 181. Philadelphia, 9 June 1912.

Human brotherhood and dependence exist because mutual helpfulness and cooperation are the two necessary principles underlying human welfare.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 150. New York, 28 May 1912.

The Poor and Needy

Thou must show forth that which will ensure the peace and the well-being of the miserable and the downtrodden.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 84

Know ye that the poor are the trust of God in your midst. Watch that ye betray not His trust, that ye deal not unjustly with them and that ye walk not in the ways of the treacherous. Ye will most certainly be called upon to answer for His trust on the day when the Balance of Justice shall be set, the day when unto every one shall be rendered his due, when the doings of all men, be they rich or poor, shall be weighed.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 251; and *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 9.

All have been enjoined to earn a living, and as for those who are incapable of doing so, it is incumbent on the Deputies of God and on the wealthy to make adequate provision for them.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 147, p. 72.

O SON OF MAN!

Should prosperity befall thee, rejoice not, and should abasement come upon thee, grieve not, for both shall pass away and be no more.

O SON OF BEING!

If poverty overtake thee, be not sad; for in time the Lord of wealth shall visit thee. Fear not abasement, for glory shall one day rest on thee.

O SON OF MAN!

Bestow My wealth upon My poor, that in heaven thou mayest draw from stores of unfading splendour and treasures of imperishable glory. But by My life! To offer up thy soul is a more glorious thing couldst thou but see with Mine eye.

-Bahá'u'lláh: The Hidden Words, Arabic Nos. 52, 53 and 57.

O CHILDREN OF DUST!

Tell the rich of the midnight sighing of the poor, lest heedlessness lead them into the path of destruction, and deprive them of the Tree of Wealth. To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.

O SON OF MY HANDMAID!

Be not troubled in poverty nor confident in riches, for poverty is followed by riches, and riches are followed by poverty. Yet to be poor in all save God is a wondrous gift, belittle not the value thereof, for in the end it will make thee rich in God, and thus thou shalt know the meaning of the utterance, "In truth ye are the poor," and the holy words, "God is the all-possessing," shall even as the true morn break forth gloriously resplendent upon the horizon of the lover's heart, and abide secure on the throne of wealth.

O YE RICH ONES ON EARTH!

The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own ease.

-Bahá'u'lláh: The Hidden Words, Persian Nos. 49, 51 and 54.

O people of wealth and riches! If you see a poor man suffering from any calamity, do not run away from him but sit with him and ask him about the things heaped upon him from the seas of determination and predestination.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Bahá'í World, Vol. IV, p. 453.*

Then the orphans will be looked after, all of whose expenses will be taken care of. The cripples in the village—all their expenses will be looked after. The poor in the village—their necessary expenses will be defrayed. And other members who for valid reasons are incapacitated—the blind, the old, the deaf—their comfort must be looked after. In the village no one will remain in need or in want. - 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity, p. 40.*

The rich will enjoy the privilege of this new economic condition as well as the poor, for owing to certain provisions and restrictions they will not be able to accumulate so much as to be burdened by its management, while the poor will be relieved from the stress of want and misery. The rich will enjoy his palace, and the poor will have his comfortable cottage.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 132. New Jersey, 19 May 1912.*

What could be better before God than thinking of the poor? For the poor are beloved by our heavenly Father. When Christ came upon the earth, those who believed in Him and followed Him were the poor and lowly, showing that the poor were near to God.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 216. New York, 1 July 1912.*

They who are possessed of riches, however, must have the utmost regard for the poor, for great is the honour destined by God for those poor who are steadfast in patience. By My life! There is no honour, except what God may please to bestow, that can compare to this honour. Great is the blessedness awaiting the poor that endure patiently and conceal their sufferings, and well is it with the rich who bestow their riches on the needy and prefer them before themselves.

Please God, the poor may exert themselves and strive to earn the means of livelihood. This is a duty which, in this most great Revelation, hath been prescribed unto every one, and is accounted in the sight of God as a goodly deed. Whoso observeth this duty, the help of the invisible One shall most certainly aid him. He can enrich, through His grace, whomsoever He pleaseth. He, verily, hath power over all things

-Baha'u'llah: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 202–203.

Regarding your question concerning helping the poor: The Bahá'ís should not go so far as to refrain from extending charity to the needy, if they are able and willing to do so. However, in this, as in many other things, they should exert moderation. The greatest gift that we can give to the poor and the down-trodden is to aid to build up the divine institutions inaugurated in this day by Bahá'u'lláh as these institutions, and this World Order when established, will eliminate the causes of poverty and the injustices which afflict the poor. We should, therefore, do both, support our Bahá'í Fund, and also be kind and generous to the needy.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Lights of Guidance*, pp. 124–125. (From a letter written on his behalf to an individual believer, 11 March 1942.)

Charity and Endowment

This Bahá'í teaching of human fellowship and kindness implies that we must be always ready to extend every assistance and help we can to those who are in distress and suffering. Bahá'í charity is of the very essence of the Teachings, and should therefore be developed in every

Bahá'í community. Charitable institutions such as orphanages, free schools and hospitals for the poor, constitute an indispensable part of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. It is the responsibility of every local Bahá'í community to insure the welfare of its poor and needy members, through whatever means possible.

But, of course, this extension of assistance to the poor, in whatever form, should under no circumstances be allowed to seriously interfere with the major collective interests of the Bahá'í Community, as distinguished from the purely personal interests of its members. The demands of the Cause transcend those of the individual, and should therefore be given precedence. But these two phases of Bahá'í social life, though not of equal importance, are by no means contradictory. Both of them are essential, and should be fostered, but each according to its own degree of importance. It is the responsibility of Bahá'í Assemblies to decide when individual interests should be subordinated to those affecting the collective welfare of the community. But, as already stated, the interest of the individual should always be safeguarded within certain limits, and provided they do not seriously affect the welfare of the group as a whole.

-Shoghi Effendi: *Lights of Guidance*, pp. 120–121. (From a letter written on his behalf to an individual believer, 26 June 1936.)

Charity is pleasing and praiseworthy in the sight of God and is regarded as a prince among goodly deeds. Consider ye and call to mind that which the All-Merciful hath revealed in the Qur'án: 'They prefer them before themselves, though poverty be their own lot. And with such as are preserved from their own covetousness shall it be well.' Viewed in this light, the blessed utterance above is, in truth, the day-

star of utterances. Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself. Verily, such a man is reckoned, by virtue of the Will of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, with the people of Bahá who dwell in the Crimson Ark.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 71.

It is not necessary to undertake special journeys to visit the resting-places of the dead. If people of substance and affluence offer the cost of such journeys to the House of Justice, it will be pleasing and acceptable in the presence of God. Happy are they that observe His precepts.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 27-28.

Everyone, whether man or woman, should hand over to a trusted person a portion of what he or she earneth through trade, agriculture or other occupation, for the training and education of children, to be spent for this purpose with the knowledge of the Trustees of the House of Justice.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 90.

As it is a blessed day [Naw-Rúz] it should not be neglected or left without results by making it a day limited to the fruits of mere pleasure. During such blessed days institutions should be founded that may be of permanent benefit and value to the people so that in their conversations and in history it may become widely known that such a good work was inaugurated on such a feast day. Therefore, the intelligent must look searchingly into conditions to find out what important affair, what philanthropic institutions are most needed, and what foundations should be laid for the community on that particular day, so that they may be established. ... If the community be in need of spreading sciences and widening the circle of knowledge, on that day they should proceed in that direction, that is to say, direct

the thoughts of all the people to that philanthropic cause. If, however, the community is in need of widening the circle of commerce or industry or agriculture, they should inaugurate the means of attaining the desired aim. If the community needs protection, proper support and care of orphans, they should act upon the welfare of the orphans, and so forth. Such undertakings as are beneficial to the poor, the weak and the helpless should be pursued in order that, on that day, through the unity of all and through great meetings, results may be obtained, the glory and blessings of that day may be declared and manifest. - 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *A Blessed Day*, A talk published by Dr. Baher Forghani in *Days to Remember*, p. 26; part in *Lights of Guidance*, pp. 303–304; *Star of the West*, Vol. IX, No. 1, pp. 8–9; and cited in a compilation, prepared by the Office of Social and Economic Development, entitled *Social and Economic Development*.

Tithes

Bahá'u'lláh states that the Bahá'í law of Zakát [Tithes] follows “what hath been revealed in the Qur’án” (Q and A 107).

-Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Questions and Answers section, No. 107, p. 140.

Since such issues as the limits for exemption, the categories of income concerned, the frequency of payments, and the scale of rates for the various categories of Zakát are not mentioned in the Qur’án, these matters will have to be set forth in the future by the Universal House of Justice. Shoghi Effendi has indicated that pending such legislation the believers should, according to their means and possibilities, make regular contributions to the Bahá'í Fund.

-Baha'u'llah: The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Notes No. 161, p. 235.

Voluntary Sharing—Greater than Equality

To state the matter briefly, the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh advocate voluntary sharing, and this is a greater thing than the equalization of wealth. For equalization must be imposed from without, while sharing is a matter of free choice.

Man reacheth perfection through good deeds, voluntarily performed, not through good deeds the doing of which was forced upon him. And sharing is a personally chosen righteous act: that is, the rich should extend assistance to the poor, they should expend their substance for the poor, but of their own free will, and not because the poor have gained this end by force. For the harvest of force is turmoil and the ruin of the social order. On the other hand voluntary sharing, the freely-chosen expending of one's substance, leadeth to society's comfort and peace.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 115.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is voluntary sharing of one's property with others among mankind. This voluntary sharing is greater than equality, and consists in this, that man should not prefer himself to others, but rather should sacrifice his life and property for others. But this should not be introduced by coercion so that it becomes a law and man is compelled to follow it. Nay, rather, man should voluntarily and of his own choice sacrifice his property and life for others, and spend willingly for the poor, just as is done in Persia among the Bahá'ís.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 302.

In the Bolshevistic principles equality is effected through force. The masses who are opposed to the people of rank and to the wealthy class desire to partake of their advantages.

But in the divine teachings equality is brought about through a ready willingness to share. It is commanded as regards wealth that the rich among the people, and the aristocrats should, by their own free will and for the sake of their own happiness, concern themselves with and care for the poor. This equality is the result of the lofty characteristics and noble attributes of mankind.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 44.

Divine Civilization

Material civilization has reached an advanced plane, but now there is need of spiritual civilization. Material civilization alone will not satisfy; it cannot meet the conditions and requirements of the present age; its benefits are limited to the world of matter. There is no limitation to the spirit of man, for spirit in itself is progressive, and if the divine civilization be established, the spirit of man will advance.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 101. Cleveland, Ohio, 6 May 1912.

Every developed susceptibility will increase the effectiveness of man. Discoveries of the real will become more and more possible, and the influence of divine guidance will be increasingly recognized. All this is conducive to the divine form of civilization. ... The world shall at last find peace,

and the equalities and rights of men shall be established. The capacity of humankind will be tested, and a degree shall be attained where equality is a reality.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 101–102.

As heretofore material civilization has been extended, the divine civilization must now be promulgated. Until the two agree, real happiness among mankind will be unknown. By mere intellectual development and power of reason, man cannot attain to his fullest degree—that is to say, by means of intellect alone he cannot accomplish the progress effected by religion.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 170. New York, 2 June 1912.

While it is true that its people have attained a marvellous material civilization, I hope that spiritual forces may animate this great body and a corresponding spiritual civilization be established.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 19–20. New York, 16 April 1912.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that although material civilization is one of the means for the progress of the world of mankind, yet until it becomes combined with Divine civilization, the desired result, which is the felicity of mankind, will not be attained.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 303.

Material civilization is like a lamp-glass. Divine civilization is the lamp itself and the glass without the light is dark. Material civilization is like the body. No matter how infinitely graceful, elegant and beautiful it may be, it is dead. Divine civilization is like the spirit, and the body gets its life from the spirit, otherwise it becomes a corpse. It has thus been made evident that the world of mankind is in need of the breaths of the Holy Spirit.

Detachment

Cast away that which ye possess, and, on the wings of detachment, soar beyond all created things. Thus biddeth you the Lord of creation, the movement of Whose Pen hath revolutionized the soul of mankind.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 54, p. 39; *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 139; and *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 117.

What advantage is there in the earthly things which men possess? That which shall profit them, they have utterly neglected.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 40, p. 34; *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 138.

O MY SERVANT!

Free thyself from the fetters of this world, and loose thy soul from the prison of self. Seize thy chance, for it will come to thee no more.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Persian No. 40.

O SON OF PASSION!

Cleanse thyself from the defilement of riches and in perfect peace advance into the realm of poverty; that from the well-spring of detachment thou mayest quaff the wine of immortal life.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Persian No. 55.

Earthly treasures We have not bequeathed, nor have We added such cares as they entail. By God! In earthly riches fear is hidden and peril is concealed. Consider ye and call to mind that which the All-Merciful hath revealed in the

Qur'án: 'Woe betide every slanderer and defamer, him that layeth up riches and counteth them.' (Qur'án 104:1-2)

Fleeting are the riches of the world; all that perisheth and changeth is not, and hath never been, worthy of attention, except to a recognized measure.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 219. (Kitáb-i-'Ahd, the Book of the Covenant)

Justice

O SON OF SPIRIT!

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 may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and 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.

-Bahá'u'lláh: The Hidden Words, Arabic No. 2.

They that are just and fair-minded in their judgement occupy a sublime station and hold an exalted rank. The light of piety and uprightness shineth resplendent from these souls. We earnestly hope that the peoples and countries of the world may not be deprived of the splendours of these two luminaries.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 37.

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. The ocean of divine wisdom surgeth within this exalted word, while the books of the world cannot contain its inner significance. Were mankind to be adorned with this raiment, they would behold the day-star of the utterance, 'On that day God will satisfy everyone out of His abundance,

(Qur'án 4:129) shining resplendent above the horizon of the world. Appreciate ye the value of this utterance; it is a noble fruit that the Tree of the Pen of Glory hath yielded.

-Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 66-67.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are justice and right. Until these are realized on the plane of existence, all things shall be in disorder and remain imperfect.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 304.

We ask God to endow human souls with justice so that they may be fair, and may strive to provide for the comfort of all, that each member of humanity may pass his life in the utmost comfort and welfare. Then this material world will become the very paradise of the Kingdom, this elemental earth will be in a heavenly state and all the servants of God will live in the utmost joy, happiness and gladness.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: Foundations of World Unity, p. 43.

In reality, so far great injustice has befallen the common people.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: Foundations of World Unity, pp. 43-44.

The government of the countries should conform to the Divine Law which gives equal justice to all. This is the only way in which the deplorable superfluity of great wealth and miserable, demoralizing, degrading poverty can be

abolished. Not until this is done will the Law of God be obeyed.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Paris Talks, p. 154.

Among the results of the manifestation of spiritual forces will be that the human world will adapt itself to a new social form, the justice of God will become manifest throughout human affairs, and human equality will be universally established. ...

The essence of the matter is that divine justice will become manifest in human conditions and affairs, and all mankind will find comfort and enjoyment in life.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 132. New Jersey, 19 May 1912.

Inheritance

a. Inheritance falls into the following categories.

<i>1. children</i>	<i>1,080</i>	<i>out of</i>	<i>2,520 shares</i>
<i>2. husband or wife</i>	<i>390</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>2,520 "</i>
<i>3. father</i>	<i>330</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>2,520 "</i>
<i>4. mother</i>	<i>270</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>2,520 "</i>
<i>5. brother</i>	<i>210</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>2,520 "</i>
<i>6. sister</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>2,520 "</i>
<i>7. teacher</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>2,520 "</i>

...

- c. i. In cases where there is no issue the share of the children reverts to the House of Justice to be expended on orphans and widows and for whatever will profit mankind.*
- ii. If the son of the deceased be dead and leave issue, these will inherit the share of their father. If the daughter of the deceased be dead and leave issue, her share will have to be divided into the seven categories specified in the Most Holy Book.*
- d. Should one leave offspring but either part or all of the other categories of inheritors be non-existent, two thirds of their shares reverts to the offspring and one third to the House of Justice.*
- e. Should none of the specified beneficiaries exist, two thirds of the inheritance reverts to the nephews and nieces of the deceased. If these do not exist, the same share reverts to the aunts and uncles; lacking these, to their sons and daughters. In any case the remaining third reverts to the House of Justice.*
- f. Should one leave none of the aforementioned heirs, the entire inheritance reverts to the House of Justice.*
- g. The residence and the personal clothing of the deceased father pass to the male not to the female offspring. If there be several residences the principal and most important one passes to the male offspring. The remaining residences will together with the other possessions of the deceased have to be divided among the heirs. If there be no male offspring two thirds of the principal residence and the personal clothing of the deceased father will revert to the female issue and one third to the House of Justice. In the case of the deceased mother all her used clothing is to be*

equally divided amongst her daughters. Her unworn clothing, jewels and property must be divided among her heirs, as well as her used clothing if she leaves no daughter.

h. Should the children of the deceased be minors their share should either be entrusted to a reliable person or to a company for purposes of investment, until they attain the age of maturity. A share of the interest accrued should be assigned to the trustee.

i. The inheritance should not be divided until after the payment of the Huqúqu 'lláh (The Right of God), of any debts contracted by the deceased and of any expenses incurred for a befitting funeral and burial.

j. If the brother of the deceased is from the same father he will inherit his full allotted share. If he is from another father he will inherit only two thirds of his share, the remaining one third reverting to the House of Justice. The same law is applicable to the sister of the deceased.

k. In case there are full brothers or full sisters, brothers and sisters from the mother's side do not inherit.

l. A non-Bahá'í teacher does not inherit. If there should be more than one teacher, the share allotted to the teacher is to be equally divided among them.

m. Non-Bahá'í heirs do not inherit.

n. Aside from the wife's used clothing and gifts of jewellery or otherwise which have been proven to have been given her by her husband, whatever the husband has purchased for his wife are to be considered as the husband's possessions to be divided among his heirs.

o. Any person is at liberty to will his possessions as he sees fit provided he makes provisions for the payment of Huqúqu'lláh and the discharge of his debts.

-Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Other Sections, pp. 153–156.

In future, a manufacturer will not be allowed to leave all his property to his own family. A law will be made something like this—that he must leave one-quarter only of his property to his family, and the other three-quarters must go to the factory workers who have created his wealth.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: Star of the West, Vol. VIII:1, p. 11.

Huqúqu'lláh

Readers are advised to read the compilation on Huququ'llah- The Right of God by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice for a detailed study of this subject.

Nothing that existeth in the world of being hath ever been or ever will be worthy of mention. However, if a person be graciously favoured to offer a penny-worth—nay even less—in the path of God, this would in His sight be preferable and superior to all the treasures of the earth. It is for this reason that the one true God—exalted be His glory—hath in all His heavenly Scriptures praised those who observe His precepts and bestow their wealth for His sake. Beseech ye God that He may enable everyone to discharge the obligation of

Huqúq, inasmuch as the progress and promotion of the Cause of God depend on material means. If His faithful servants could realize how meritorious are benevolent deeds in these days, they would all arise to do that which is meet and seemly.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I (Huqúqu'lláh)*, p. 489; *Huququ'llah- The Right of God*, 2007, #4

It is incumbent upon everyone to discharge the obligation of Huqúq. The advantages gained from this deed revert to the persons themselves. However, the acceptance of the offerings dependeth on the spirit of joy, fellowship and contentment that the righteous souls who fulfil this injunction will manifest. If such is the attitude acceptance is permissible, and not otherwise.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I (Huqúqu'lláh)*, p. 490; *Huququ'llah- The Right of God*, #11

Huqúqu'lláh is indeed a great law. It is incumbent upon all to make this offering, because it is the source of grace, abundance, and of all good. It is a bounty which shall remain with every soul in every world of the worlds of God, the All-Possessing, the All-Bountiful.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I (Huqúqu'lláh)*, p. 490; *Huququ'llah- The Right of God*, #13

Fix thy gaze upon the glory of the Cause. Speak forth that which will attract the hearts and the minds. To demand the Huqúq is in no wise permissible. This command was revealed in the Book of God for various necessary matters ordained by God to be dependent upon material means. Therefore, if someone, with utmost pleasure and gladness, nay with insistence, wisheth to partake of this blessing, thou mayest accept. Otherwise, acceptance is not permissible.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I (Huqúqu'lláh)*, p. 491; *Huququ'llah- The Right of God*, #84

Question: In the holy Tablets it hath been revealed that when someone acquireth the equivalent of nineteen mithqáls of gold, he should pay the Right of God on that sum. Might it be explained how much of this nineteen should be paid?

Answer: Nineteen out of one hundred is established by the ordinance of God. Computation should be made on this basis. It may then be ascertained what amount is due on nineteen.

-Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Questions and Answers, No. 89, pp. 132–133.

The minimum amount subject to Huqúqu'lláh is reached when one's possessions are worth the number of Váhíd (19); that is, whenever one owneth 19 mithqáls of gold, or acquireth possessions attaining this value, after having deducted therefrom the yearly expenses, the Huqúq becometh applicable and its payment is obligatory.

-Bahá'u'lláh: The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I (Huqúqu'lláh), p. 493; Huququ'llah- The Right of God, #44

There is a prescribed ruling for the Huqúqu'lláh. After the House of Justice hath come into being, the law thereof will be made manifest, in conformity with the Will of God

- Bahá'u'lláh: Huququ'llah- The Right of God, #20

Thine intention to pay a visit to the blessed House is acceptable and well-pleasing in the sight of this Wronged One, provided it is accomplished in a spirit of joy and radiance and would not prove contrary to the dictates of wisdom.

Say: O people, the first duty is to recognize the one true God—magnified be His glory—the second is to show forth constancy in His Cause and, after these, one's duty is to purify one's riches and earthly possessions according to that which is prescribed by God. Therefore it beseemeth thee to

meet thine obligation to the Right of God first, then to direct thy steps toward His blessed House. This hath been brought to thine attention as a sign of favour.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I (Huqúqu'lláh)*, p. 499; *Huququ'llah- The Right of God*, #2

Payments for the Huqúqu'lláh cannot be handed over to every person. These words have been uttered by Him Who is the sovereign Truth. The Huqúqu'lláh should be kept in the custody of trusted individuals and forwarded to His holy court through the Trustees of God.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I (Huqúqu'lláh)*, p. 508; *Huququ'llah- The Right of God*, #88

Thou hast enquired about the Huqúq. From one's annual income, all expenses during the year are deductible, and on what is left 19% is payable to the Huqúq. Thus, a person hath earned £1,000 income out of his business. After deducting his annual expenses of say £600, he would have a surplus of £400 on which Huqúq is payable at the rate of 19%. This would amount to £76 to be offered for charitable purposes to the Huqúq.

The Huqúq is not levied on one's entire possessions each year. A person's wealth may be worth £100,000. How can he be expected to pay Huqúq on this property every year? For instance, whatever income thou hast earned in a particular year, you should deduct from it your expenses during that year. The Huqúq will then be payable on the remainder. Possessions on which Huqúq was paid the previous year will be exempt from further payment.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I (Huqúqu'lláh)*, pp. 511–512; *Huququ'llah- The Right of God*, #46

Huqúq is applied on everything one possesseth. However, if a person hath paid the Huqúq on a certain property, and the

income from that property is equal to his needs, no Huqúq is payable by that person.

Huqúq is not payable on agricultural tools and equipment, and on animals used in ploughing the land, to the extent that these are necessary.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I (Huqúqu'lláh)*, p. 512; and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 308; *Huququ'llah- The Right of God*, #48

Regarding the Huqúqu'lláh ... this is applied to one's merchandise, property and income. After deducting the necessary expenses, whatever is left as profit, and is an addition to one's capital, such a sum is subject to Huqúq. When one has paid Huqúq once on a particular sum, that sum is no longer subject to Huqúq, unless it should pass from one person to another. One's residence, and the household furnishings are exempt from Huqúq ... Huqúqu'lláh is paid to the Centre of the Cause.

-Shoghi Effendi: *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I (Huqúqu'lláh)*, p.515. (4 April–3 May 1927—translated from the Persian.); *Huququ'llah- The Right of God*, #51

The Great Financial Depression

The Great Depression, the aftermath of the severest ordeals humanity had ever experienced, the disintegration of the Versailles system, the recrudescence of militarism in its most menacing aspects, the failure of vast experiments and new-born institutions to safeguard the peace and tranquillity of peoples, classes and nations, have bitterly disillusioned humanity and prostrated its spirits.

-Shoghi Effendi: *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 188.

Competition

In the world of nature we behold the living organisms in a ceaseless struggle for existence. Everywhere we are confronted by evidences of the physical survival of the fittest. This is the very source of error and misapprehension in the opinions and theories of men who fail to realize that the world of nature is inherently defective in cause and outcome and that the defects therein must be removed by education.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 400. Washington, D.C., 7 November 1912.

In nature there is the law of the survival of the fittest. Even if man be not educated, then according to the natural institutes this natural law will demand of man supremacy. The purpose and object of schools, colleges and universities is to educate man and thereby rescue and redeem him from the exigencies and defects of nature and to awaken within him the capability of controlling and appropriating nature's bounties.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 353. Palo Alto, California, 8 October 1912.

Shall he, then, remain its captive, even failing to qualify under the natural law which commands the survival of the fittest? That is to say, shall he continue to live upon the level of the animal kingdom without distinction between them and himself in natural impulses and ferocious instincts?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 353. Palo Alto, California, 8 October 1912.

The World's Equilibrium

The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System - the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 181, p. 85; *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, Chapter LXX, p. 136; and *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 118.

Say: This is the infallible Balance which the Hand of God is holding, in which all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth are weighed, and their fate determined, if ye be of them that believe and recognize this truth.

-Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 183, p. 86; *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 136-137; and *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 119.

Economy is the foundation of human prosperity. The spendthrift is always in trouble. Prodigality on the part of any person is an unpardonable sin. We must never live on others like a parasitic plant. Every person must have a profession, whether it be literary or manual, and must live a clean, manly, honest life, an example of purity to be imitated by others. It is more kingly to be satisfied with a crust of stale bread than to enjoy a sumptuous dinner of many courses, the money for which comes out of the pockets of others. The mind of a contented person is always peaceful and his heart at rest.

-'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Quoted by J. E. Esselmont in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, Simple Life section, p. 98.

“...there are certain guiding principles in the Bahá’í Sacred Writings on the subject of economics, but these do by no means cover the whole field of theoretical and applied economics, and are mostly intended to guide future Bahá’í economic writers and technicians to evolve an economic system which would function in full conformity with the spirit and the exact provisions of the Cause on this and similar subjects. The International House of Justice will have, in consultation with economic experts, to assist in the formulation and evolution of the Bahá’í economic system of the future...”

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The Guardian of
the Bahá’í Faith**



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