

Becoming A Brilliant Star Character Development

Why Should We Acquire Virtues And Develop Our Character?

The Purpose And Aim Of The Manifestation Of God Is Character Development

1. The purpose of the one true God in manifesting Himself is to summon all mankind to truthfulness and sincerity, to piety and trustworthiness, to resignation and submissiveness to the Will of God, to forbearance and kindness, to uprightness and wisdom. His object is to array every man with the mantle of a saintly character, and to adorn him with the ornament of holy and goodly deeds.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 299

2. The aim of this Wronged One in sustaining woes and tribulations, in revealing the Holy Verses and in demonstrating proofs hath been naught but to quench the flame of hate and enmity, that the horizon of the hearts of men may be illumined with the light of concord and attain real peace and tranquillity. From the dawning-place of the divine Tablet the day-star of this utterance shineth resplendent, and it behoveth everyone to fix his gaze upon it: We exhort you, O peoples of the world, to observe that which will elevate your station. Hold fast to the fear of God and firmly adhere to what is right. Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk. God hath forgiven what is past. Henceforward everyone should utter that which is meet and seemly, and should refrain from slander, abuse and whatever causeth sadness in men. Lofty is the station of man! Not long ago this exalted Word streamed forth from the treasury of Our Pen of Glory: Great and blessed is this Day--the Day in which all that lay latent in man hath been and will be made manifest. 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*, pp. 219-220

God Is Central To Human Development

3. The honour of man is through the attainment of the knowledge of God; his happiness is from the love of God; his joy is in the glad-tidings of God; his greatness is dependent upon his servitude to God. The highest development of man is his entrance into the divine kingdom; and the outcome of this human existence is the nucleus and essence of eternal life.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 329

The Role And Duty Of The Followers Of The Manifestation

4. The companions of God are, in this day, the lump that must leaven the peoples of the world. They must show forth such trustworthiness, such truthfulness and perseverance, such deeds and character, that all mankind may profit by their example.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 19; *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Excellence in All Things), p. 367; *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. II) (Trustworthiness), p. 334

5. Centre your attention unceasingly upon that which will cause the Word of God to be exalted. In this Most Great Revelation goodly deeds and a praiseworthy character are regarded as the hosts of God, likewise is His blessed and holy Word. These hosts are the lodestone of the hearts of men and the effective means for unlocking doors. Of all the weapons in the world this is the keenest.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 256

6. God hath prescribed unto every one the duty of teaching His Cause. Whoever ariseth to discharge this duty, must needs, ere he proclaimeth His Message, adorn himself with the ornament of an upright and praiseworthy character, so that his words may attract the hearts of such as are receptive to his call. Without it, he can never hope to influence his hearers.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 335

The Importance Of Good Character

7. The third Taraz concerneth good character. A good character is, verily, the best mantle for men from God. With it He adorneth the temples of His loved ones. By My life! The light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the radiance thereof. Whoso attaineth unto it is accounted as a jewel among men. The glory and the upliftment of the world must needs depend upon it. A goodly character is a means whereby men are guided to the Straight Path and are led to the Great Announcement. Well is it with him who is adorned with the saintly attributes and character of the Concourse on High.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 36

8. Good character is, verily, the best mantle for men on the part of God; by this God adorns the temples of His friends. By My life, the light of good character surpasses the light of the sun and its effulgence. He who attains thereto is accounted as the essence of men. Upon this the honour and glory of the world are based and are dependent. Good character is the means of guiding men to the right path and the great message.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 7

9. Were man to appreciate the greatness of his station and the loftiness of his destiny he would manifest naught save goodly character, pure deeds, and a seemly and praiseworthy conduct. If the learned and wise men of goodwill were to impart guidance unto the people, the whole earth would be regarded as one country. Verily this is the undoubted truth. This servant appealeth to every diligent and enterprising soul to exert his utmost endeavour and arise to rehabilitate the conditions in all regions and to quicken the dead with the living waters of wisdom and utterance,

by virtue of the love he cherisheth for God, the One, the Peerless, the Almighty, the Beneficent.
Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 172

10. The most vital duty, in this day, is to purify your characters, to correct your manners, and improve your conduct. The beloved of the Merciful must show forth such character and conduct among His creatures, that the fragrance of their holiness may be shed upon the whole world, and may quicken the dead, inasmuch as the purpose of the Manifestation of God and the dawning of the limitless lights of the Invisible is to educate the souls of men, and refine the character of every living man--so that blessed individuals, who have freed themselves from the murk of the animal world, shall rise up with those qualities which are the adornings of the reality of man. The purpose is that earthlings should turn into the people of Heaven, and those who walk in darkness should come into the light, and those who are excluded should join the inner circle of the Kingdom, and those who are as nothing should become intimates of the everlasting Glory. It is that the portionless should gain their share of the boundless sea, and the ignorant drink their fill from the living fount of knowledge; that those who thirst for blood should forsake their savagery, and those who are barbed of claw should turn gentle and forbearing, and those who love war should seek instead for true conciliation; it is that the brutal, their talons razor-sharp, should enjoy the benefits of lasting peace; that the foul should learn that there is a realm of purity, and the tainted find their way to the rivers of holiness.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 10-11

11. The sword of a virtuous character and upright conduct is sharper than blades of steel.
Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 29

12. A Greek philosopher living in the days of the youth of Christianity, being full of the Christian element, though not a professing Christian, wrote thus: 'It is my belief that religion is the very foundation of true civilization'. For, unless the moral character of a nation is educated, as well as its brain and its talents, civilization has no sure basis.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 31

Strain Every Nerve To Acquire Both Inner And Outer Perfections

13. Strain every nerve to acquire both inner and outer perfections, for the fruit of the human tree hath ever been and will ever be perfections both within and without. It is not desirable that a man be left without knowledge or skills, for he is then but a barren tree. Then, so much as capacity and capability allow, ye needs must deck the tree of being with fruits such as knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception and eloquent speech.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Bahá'í Education), p. 247;
(Excellence), p. 368)

The Limit Of Character Development

14. Know that the conditions of existence are limited to the conditions of servitude, of prophethood and of Deity, but the divine and the contingent perfections are unlimited.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 130

15. If thou seekest to be intoxicated with the cup of the Most Mighty Gift, cut thyself from the world and be quit of self and desire. Exert thyself night and day until spiritual powers may penetrate thy heart and soul. Abandon the body and the material, until the merciful powers may become manifest; because not until the soil is become pure will it develop through the heavenly bounty; not until the heart is purified, will the radiance of the Sun of Truth shine therein. I beg of God that thou wilt day by day increase the purity of thy heart, the cheerfulness of thy soul, the light of thy insight and the search for Truth.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 362

Two Human Powers Need To Be Developed

16. Man has two powers; and his development, two aspects. One power is connected with the material world, and by it he is capable of material advancement. The other power is spiritual, and through its development his inner, potential nature is awakened. These powers are like two wings. Both must be developed, for flight is impossible with one wing. Praise be to God! Material advancement has been evident in the world, but there is need of spiritual advancement in like proportion. We must strive unceasingly and without rest to accomplish the development of the spiritual nature in man, and endeavor with tireless energy to advance humanity toward the nobility of its true and intended station. For the body of man is accidental; it is of no importance. The time of its disintegration will inevitably come. But the spirit of man is essential and, therefore, eternal. It is a divine bounty. It is the effulgence of the Sun of Reality and, therefore, of greater importance than the physical body.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 60

The Result Of Acquiring Both Virtues And Knowledge?

17. If, however, an individual hath spiritual characteristics, and virtues that shine out, and his purpose in life be spiritual and his inclinations be directed toward God, and he also study other branches of knowledge--then we have light upon light:¹ his outer being luminous, his private character radiant, his heart sound, his thought elevated, his understanding swift, his rank noble.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Education), p. 282

¹ Qur'án 24:35

Where Should We Begin In The Process Of Acquiring Virtues And Developing Character?

The Purpose Of Seeking And Learning

18. SON OF JUSTICE!

Whither can a lover go but to the land of his beloved? and what seeker findeth rest away from his heart's desire? To the true lover reunion is life, and separation is death. His breast is void of patience and his heart hath no peace. A myriad lives he would forsake to hasten to the abode of his beloved.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Persian #4

19. We have decreed, O people, that the highest and last end of all learning be the recognition of Him Who is the object of all knowledge.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 197

20. For every one of you his paramount duty is to choose for himself that on which no others may infringe and none usurp from him. Such a thing...is the love of God, could ye but perceive it.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 261

The Fear Of God Is The Foundation Of Good Character

21. The fear of God hath ever been a sure defence and a safe stronghold for all the peoples of the world. It is the chief cause of the protection of mankind, and supreme instrument for its preservation. Indeed, there existeth in man a faculty which deterreth him from, and guardeth him against, whatever is unworthy and unseemly, and which is known as his sense of shame.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 27

22. The fourth Ishraq

In this Revelation the hosts that can render it victorious are the hosts of praiseworthy deeds and upright character. The leader and commander of these hosts hath ever been the fear of God, a fear that encompasseth all things and reigneth over all things.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 126; *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 26

23. The fear of God hath ever been the prime factor in the education of His creatures. Well is it with them that have attained thereunto!

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 27

24. Further, in another Tablet, We have said: "O thou who hast fixed thy gaze upon My countenance! Admonish men to fear God. By God! This fear is the chief commander of the army of Thy Lord. Its hosts are a praiseworthy character and goodly deeds. Through it have the cities of men's hearts been opened throughout the ages and centuries, and the standards of ascendancy and triumph raised above all other standards."

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 136

Human Beings Have Three Types Of Characters

25. [Man] has the innate character, the inherited character, and the acquired character which is gained by education.

With regard to the innate character, although the divine creation is purely good, yet the varieties of natural qualities in man come from the difference of degree; all are excellent, but they are more or less so, according to the degree. So all mankind possess intelligence and capacities, but the intelligence, the capacity and the worthiness of men differ. This is evident.... The variety of inherited qualities comes from strength and weakness of constitution--that is to say, when the two parents are weak, the children will be weak; if they are strong, the children will be robust. In the same way, purity of blood has a great effect; for the pure germ is like the superior stock which exists in plants and animals....

But the difference of the qualities with regard to culture is very great, for education has great influence. Through education the ignorant become learned; the cowardly become valiant. Through cultivation the crooked branch becomes straight; the acid, bitter fruit of the mountains and woods becomes sweet and delicious; and the five-petaled flower becomes hundred petaled. Through education savage nations become civilized, and even the animals become domesticated. Education must be considered as most important, for as diseases in the world of bodies are extremely contagious, so, in the same way, qualities of spirit and heart are extremely contagious. Education has a universal influence, and the differences caused by it are very great....

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 212-216

There Are Three Types Of Education

26. But education is of three kinds: material, human and spiritual. Material education is concerned with the progress and development of the body, through gaining its sustenance, its material comfort and ease. This education is common to animals and man.

Human education signifies civilization and progress--that is to say, government, administration, charitable works, trades, arts and handicrafts, sciences, great inventions and discoveries and elaborate institutions, which are the activities essential to man as distinguished from the animal.

Divine education is that of the Kingdom of God: it consists in acquiring divine perfections, and this is true education; for in this state man becomes the focus of divine blessings, the manifestation of the words, "Let Us make man in Our image, and after Our likeness."² This is the goal of the world of humanity.

Now we need an educator who will be at the same time a material, human and spiritual educator, and whose authority will be effective in all conditions. So if anyone should say, "I possess perfect comprehension and intelligence, and I have no need of such an educator," he would be denying that which is clear and evident, as though a child should say, "I have no need of education; I will act according to my reason and intelligence, and so I shall attain the perfections of existence"; or as though the blind should say, "I am in no need of sight, because many other blind people exist without difficulty."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 8

² Cf. Genesis 1:26

The Prerequisites To Spiritual Search

27. The essence of these words is this: they that tread the path of faith, they that thirst for the wine of certitude, must cleanse themselves of all that is earthly--their ears from idle talk, their minds from vain imaginings, their hearts from worldly affections, their eyes from that which perisheth. They should put their trust in God, and, holding fast unto Him, follow in His way. Then will they be made worthy of the effulgent glories of the sun of divine knowledge and understanding, and become the recipients of a grace that is infinite and unseen, inasmuch as man can never hope to attain unto the knowledge of the All-Glorious, can never quaff from the stream of divine knowledge and wisdom, can never enter the abode of immortality, nor partake of the cup of divine nearness and favour, unless and until he ceases to regard the words and deeds of mortal men as a standard for the true understanding and recognition of God and His Prophets.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 3-4

28. But, O my brother, when a true seeker determineth to take the step of search in the path leading to the knowledge of the Ancient of Days, he must, before all else, cleanse and purify his heart, which is the seat of the revelation of the inner mysteries of God, from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge, and the allusions of the embodiments of satanic fancy. He must purge his breast, which is the sanctuary of the abiding love of the Beloved, of every defilement, and sanctify his soul from all that pertaineth to water and clay, from all shadowy and ephemeral attachments. He must so cleanse his heart that no remnant of either love or hate may linger therein, lest that love blindly incline him to error, or that hate repel him away from the truth. Even as thou dost witness in this day how most of the people, because of such love and hate, are bereft of the immortal Face, have strayed far from the Embodiments of the divine mysteries, and, shepherdless, are roaming through the wilderness of oblivion and error. That seeker must at all times put his trust in God, must renounce the peoples of the earth, detach himself from the world of dust, and cleave unto Him Who is the Lord of Lords. He must never seek to exalt himself above any one, must wash away from the tablet of his heart every trace of pride and vainglory, must cling unto patience and resignation, observe silence, and refrain from idle talk. For the tongue is a smouldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endure a century.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 192-193

Steps To Take As We Begin To Develop Good Character

29. It is imperative to acquire the knowledge of divine proofs and evidences, and to acquaint oneself with convincing testimonies which demonstrate the revelation of God's resplendent Light. The study group thou didst organize hath imparted much joy and happiness to the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Thou must exert much effort and show forth perseverance and constancy that, God willing, through the reviving breaths of His mercy, souls may be so educated as to become like radiant candles shining in the assemblage of divine knowledge and understanding. This matter is highly important. It is binding on every one and must be regarded as an obligation....

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Importance of Deepening*, p. 194

The Impact Of The Holy Spirit On The Development Of Good Character?

30. The world of humanity cannot advance through mere physical powers and intellectual attainments; nay, rather, the Holy Spirit is essential. The divine Father must assist the human world to attain maturity. The body of man is in need of physical and mental energy, but his spirit requires the life and fortification of the Holy Spirit. Without its protection and quickening the human world would be extinguished. Jesus Christ declared, "Let the dead bury their dead." He also said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is evident, therefore, according to Christ that the human spirit which is not fortified by the presence of the Holy Spirit is dead and in need of resurrection by that divine power; otherwise, though materially advanced to high degrees, man cannot attain full and complete progress.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 182

The Role Of Faith In Developing Good Character

31. It is from the bounty of God that man is selected for the highest degree; and the differences which exist between men in regard to spiritual progress and heavenly perfections are also due to the choice of the Compassionate One. For faith, which is life eternal, is the sign of bounty, and not the result of justice. The flame of the fire of love, in this world of earth and water, comes through the power of attraction and not by effort and striving. Nevertheless, by effort and perseverance, knowledge, science and other perfections can be acquired; but only the light of the Divine Beauty can transport and move the spirits through the force of attraction. Therefore, it is said: "Many are called, but few are chosen."³

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 130

The Role Of Religion In Developing Good Character

32. The real bond of integrity is religious in character, for religion indicates the oneness of the world of humanity. Religion serves the world of morality. Religion purifies the hearts. Religion impels men to achieve praiseworthy deeds. Religion becomes the cause of love in human hearts, for religion is a divine foundation, the foundation ever conducive to life. The teachings of God are the source of illumination to the people of the world. Religion is ever constructive, not destructive.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 344; *Japan Will Turn Ablaze*, p. 43

³ Matt. 22:14

33. Religion, moreover, is not a series of beliefs, a set of customs; religion is the teachings of the Lord God, teachings which constitute the very life of humankind, which urge high thoughts upon the mind, refine the character, and lay the groundwork for man's everlasting honour.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 52-53

34. I give you my advice, and it is this: Train these children with divine exhortations. From their childhood instill in their hearts the love of God so they may manifest in their lives the fear of God and have confidence in the bestowals of God. Teach them to free themselves from human imperfections and to acquire the divine perfections latent in the heart of man. The life of man is useful if he attains the perfections of man. If he becomes the center of the imperfections of the world of humanity, death is better than life, and nonexistence better than existence. Therefore, make ye an effort in order that these children may be rightly trained and educated and that each one of them may attain perfection in the world of humanity. Know ye the value of these children, for they are all my children.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 53-54

The Role Of The Mother And Father In The Education Of The Child

35. As to the education of children, exert every effort to further this; it is of the utmost importance. So too, the education of girls in all the rules of righteous conduct, that they may grow up with a good character and high standards of behaviour. For mothers are the first educators of the child, and every child at the beginning of life is like a fresh and tender branch in his parents' hands. His father and mother can train him in any way they choose.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Education), p. 284

36. Unto every father hath been enjoined the instruction of his son and daughter in the art of reading and writing and in all that hath been laid down in the Holy Tablet.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Áqdas*, p. 37; *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 128

37. Ye should consider the question of goodly character as of the first importance. It is incumbent upon every father and mother to counsel their children over a long period, and guide them unto those things which lead to everlasting honour.

Encourage ye the school children, from their earliest years, to deliver speeches of high quality, so that in their leisure time they will engage in giving cogent and effective talks, expressing themselves with clarity and eloquence.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 134

The Relationship Between A Child And His Or Her Parents

38. The fruits of the tree of existence are trustworthiness, loyalty, truthfulness and purity. After the recognition of the oneness of the Lord, exalted be He, the most important of all duties is to have due regard for the rights of one's parents. This matter hath been mentioned in all the Books of God...

Bahá’u’lláh: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Family Life), p. 385

39. Say, O my people! Show honour to your parents and pay homage to them. This will cause blessings to descend upon you from the clouds of the bounty of your Lord, the Exalted, the Great.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Family Life), p. 386

Subjects To Be Taught In School

40. The subjects to be taught in children's school are many, and for lack of time We can touch on only a few: First and most important is training in behaviour and good character; the rectification of qualities; arousing the desire to become accomplished and acquire perfections, and to cleave unto the religion of God and stand firm in His Laws: to accord total obedience to every just government, to show forth loyalty and trustworthiness to the ruler of the time, to be well wishers of mankind, to be kind to all.

And further, as well as in the ideals of character, instruction in such arts and sciences as are of benefit, and in foreign tongues. Also, the repeating of prayers for the well-being of ruler and ruled; and the avoidance of materialistic works that are current among those who see only natural causation, and tales of love, and books that arouse the passions.

To sum up, let all the lessons be entirely devoted to the acquisition of human perfections.

Here, then, in brief are directions for the curriculum of these schools.

Greetings be unto you, and praise.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. II) (Writers and Writing), p. 410

41. At the outset of every endeavour, it is incumbent to look to the end of it. Of all the arts and sciences, set the children to studying those which will result in advantage to man, will ensure his progress and elevate his rank. Thus the noisome odours of lawlessness will be dispelled, and thus through the high endeavours of the nation's leaders, all will live cradled, secure and in peace.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 168-169

What Are Some Important Virtues And Character Attributes To Acquire?

The Spiritually Learned Should Be Characterized By Inner And Outer Perfections

42. For every thing, however, God has created a sign and symbol, and established standards and tests by which it may be known. The spiritually learned must be characterized by both inward and outward perfections; they must possess a good character, an enlightened nature, a pure intent, as well as intellectual power, brilliance and discernment, intuition, discretion and foresight, temperance, reverence, and a heartfelt fear of God. For an unlit candle, however great in diameter and tall, is no better than a barren palm tree or a pile of dead wood.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 33-34

The Seven Qualifications Of The Divinely Enlightened Soul

43. As to the seven qualifications (of the divinely enlightened soul) of which thou hast asked an explanation, it is as follows:

KNOWLEDGE. Man must attain the knowledge of God.

FAITH.

STEADFASTNESS.

TRUTHFULNESS. Truthfulness is the foundation of all the virtues of the world of humanity. Without truthfulness, progress and success in all of the worlds of God are impossible for a soul. When this holy attribute is established in man, all the divine qualities will also become realized.

UPRIGHTNESS. And this is one of the greatest divine attainments.

FIDELITY. This is also a beautiful trait of the heavenly man.

EVANESCENCE or Humility. That is to say, man must become evanescent in God. Must forget his own selfish conditions that he may thus arise to the station of sacrifice. It should be to such a degree that if he sleep, it should not be for pleasure, but to rest the body in order to do better, to speak better, to explain more beautifully, to serve the servants of God and to prove the truths. When he remains awake, he should seek to be attentive, serve the Cause of God and sacrifice his own stations for those of God. When he attains to this station, the confirmations of the Holy Spirit will surely reach him, and man with this power can withstand all who inhabit the earth.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Bahá’í World Faith*, p. 384

The Value Of Acquiring Wisdom

44. Above all else, the greatest gift and the most wondrous blessing hath ever been and will continue to be wisdom. It is man's unfailing Protector. It aideth him and strengtheneth him. Wisdom is God's Emissary and the Revealer of His Name the Omniscient. Through it the loftiness of man's station is made manifest and evident. It is all-knowing and the foremost Teacher in the school of existence. It is the Guide and is invested with high distinction. Thanks to its educating influence earthly beings have become imbued with a gem-like spirit which outshineth the heavens. In the city of justice it is the unrivalled Speaker Who, in the year nine, illumined the world with the joyful tidings of this Revelation. And it was this peerless Source of wisdom that at the beginning of the foundation of the world ascended the stair of inner meaning and when enthroned upon the pulpit of utterance, through the operation of the divine Will, proclaimed two words. The first heralded the promise of reward, while the second voiced the ominous warning of punishment. The promise gave rise to hope and the warning begat fear. Thus the basis of world order hath been firmly established upon these twin principles. Exalted is the Lord of wisdom, the Possessor of Great Bounty.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 66

45. The essence of wisdom is the fear of God, the dread of His scourge and punishment, and the apprehension of His justice and decree.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 155

A Caution Regarding The Acquisition Of Wisdom

46. Say, O people of the earth! Beware lest any reference to wisdom debar you from its Source or withhold you from the Dawning-Place thereof. Fix your hearts upon your Lord, the Educator, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 34

Other Virtues Associated With Wisdom

47. Trustworthiness, wisdom and honesty are, of a truth, God's beauteous adornments for His creatures. These fair garments are a befitting vesture for every temple. Happy are those that comprehend, and well is it with them that acquire such virtue.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. II) (Trustworthiness), p. 334

48. We beg of God to assist the children of His loved ones and adorn them with wisdom, good conduct, integrity and righteousness.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Bahá'í Education), p. 251

49. Say: Honesty, virtue, wisdom and a saintly character redound to the exaltation of man, while dishonesty, imposture, ignorance and hypocrisy lead to his abasement. By My life! Man's distinction lieth not in ornaments or wealth, but rather in virtuous behaviour and true understanding.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 57

50. It behooveth whosoever hath set his face towards the Most Sublime Horizon to cleave tenaciously unto the cord of patience, and to put his reliance in God, the Help in Peril, the Unconstrained. O ye loved ones of God! Drink your fill from the well-spring of wisdom, and soar ye in the atmosphere of wisdom, and speak forth with wisdom and eloquence. Thus biddeth you your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 99

The Rank Of The Virtues Of Justice And Equity

51. 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.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Arabic #2

52. Equity is the most fundamental among human virtues. The evaluation of all things must needs depend upon it.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 203

The Importance Of The Virtue Of Love

53. The foundation of Bahá'u'lláh is love...You must have infinite love for each other, each preferring the other before himself.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 213

54. The best way to thank God is to love one another.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 231

55. In the world of existence there is no more powerful magnet than the magnet of love.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*, p. 77

56. O ye beloved of the Lord! Commit not that which defileth the limpid stream of love or destroyeth the sweet fragrance of friendship. By the righteousness of the Lord! Ye were created to show love one to another and not perversity and rancour. Take pride not in love for yourselves but in love for your fellow-creatures. Glory not in love for your country, but in love for all mankind. Let your eye be chaste, your hand faithful, your tongue truthful and your heart enlightened. Abase not the station of the learned in Bahá and belittle not the rank of such rulers as administer justice amidst you. Set your reliance on the army of justice, put on the armour of wisdom, let your adorning be forgiveness and mercy and that which cheereth the hearts of the well-favoured of God.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 138-139

The Importance Of The Virtues Of Truthfulness And Trustworthiness

57. Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues. Without truthfulness progress and success, in all of the worlds of God, are impossible for any soul. When this holy attribute is established in man, all the divine qualities will also be acquired.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 459

58. Adorn your heads with the garlands of trustworthiness and fidelity, your hearts with the attire of the Fear of God, your tongues with absolute truthfulness, your bodies with the vesture of courtesy. These are in truth seemly adornings unto the temple of man, if ye be of them that reflect. Cling, O ye people of Bahá, to the cord of servitude unto God, the True One, for thereby your stations shall be made manifest, your names written and preserved, your ranks raised and your memory exalted in the Preserved Tablet. Beware lest the dwellers on earth hinder you from this glorious and exalted station. Thus have We exhorted you in most of our Epistles and now in this, Our Holy Tablet, above which hath beamed the Day-star of the Laws of the Lord, your God, the Powerful, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Áqdas*, p. 62

59. Thou art most dear to Us; and, as We love thee, so love We all in whom may be perceived the goodly adornments of trustworthiness and uprightness, and such qualities of virtue and integrity as have been enjoined upon men in the Book of God, the Lord of the Mighty Throne. Happy the lot of the soul that hath perceived the fragrant breaths of divine utterance, and given ear to what hath been revealed by God, the Omniscient, the All-Informed. God hath, verily, willed that His Cause should be assisted by the hosts of goodly deeds and a righteous character.

Blessed, then, be the man that apprehendeth this truth and acteth conformably; and woe betide those who ignore or deny it!

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. II) (Trustworthiness), p. 333

60. When we find truth, constancy, fidelity, and love, we are happy; but if we meet with lying, faithlessness, and deceit, we are miserable.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 65

The Importance Of Good Speech And A Kindly Tongue

61. Good speech and truthfulness are, in loftiness of position and rank, like unto the sun which hath risen from the horizon of the heaven of knowledge.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 12

62. A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the Spirit, it clotheth the words with meaning, it is the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 289;

Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 15

The Importance Of The Virtue Of Patience

63. O SON OF MAN!

For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Arabic #48

64. ...God, verily, loveth those women and men who show forth patience. Obey ye My commandments, and follow not the ungodly, they who have been reckoned as sinners in God's Holy Tablet.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Áqdas*, p. 43

The Importance Of The Virtue Of Courtesy

65. We, verily, have chosen courtesy, and made it the true mark of such as are nigh unto Him. Courtesy is, in truth, a raiment which fitteth all men, whether young or old. Well is it with him that adorneth his temple therewith, and woe unto him who is deprived of this great bounty.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 50

66. O people of God! I exhort you to courtesy. Courtesy is, in the primary station, the Lord of all virtues. Blessed is he who is illumined with the light of courtesy, and is adorned with the mantle of uprightness! He who is endowed with courtesy is endowed with a great station.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 27

The Importance Of Purity And Chastity

67. God hath verily made chastity to be a crown for the heads of His handmaidens. Great is the blessedness of that handmaiden that hath attained unto this great station.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 27

68. Purity and chastity have been, and still are, the most great ornaments for the handmaidens of God. God is My witness! The brightness of the light of chastity sheddeth its illumination upon the worlds of the spirit, and its fragrance is wafted even unto the Most Exalted Paradise.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 26

The Relationship Of Poverty, Wealth, And Good Character

69. They who dwell within the Tabernacle of God, and are established upon the seats of everlasting glory, will refuse, though they be dying of hunger, to stretch their hands, and seize unlawfully the property of their neighbour, however vile and worthless he may be.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 289;
Advent of Divine Justice, p. 24

70. The first Taraz and the first effulgence which hath dawned from the horizon of the Mother Book is that man should know his own self and recognize that which leadeth unto loftiness or lowliness, glory or abasement, wealth or poverty. Having attained the stage of fulfillment 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. They are, in truth, cup-bearers of the life-giving water of knowledge and guides unto the ideal way. They direct the peoples of the world to the straight path and acquaint them with that which is conducive to human upliftment and exaltation. The straight path is the one which guideth man to the dayspring of perception and to the dawning-place of true understanding and leadeth him to that which will redound to glory, honour and greatness.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 34-35

71. Then it is clear that the honor and exaltation of man must be something more than material riches. Material comforts are only a branch, but the root of the exaltation of man is the good attributes and virtues which are the adornments of his reality. These are the divine appearances, the heavenly bounties, the sublime emotions, the love and knowledge of God; universal wisdom, intellectual perception, scientific discoveries, justice, equity, truthfulness, benevolence, natural courage and innate fortitude; the respect for rights and the keeping of agreements and covenants; rectitude in all circumstances; serving the truth under all conditions; the sacrifice of one's life for the good of all people; kindness and esteem for all nations; obedience to the teachings of God; service in the Divine Kingdom; the guidance of the people, and the education of the nations and races. This is the prosperity of the human world! This is the exaltation of man in the world! This is eternal life and heavenly honor!

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 79-80

Some Additional Virtues And Attributes

72. The virtues and attributes pertaining unto God are all evident and manifest, and have been mentioned and described in all the heavenly Books. Among them are trustworthiness, truthfulness, purity of heart while communing with God, forbearance, resignation to whatever the Almighty hath decreed, contentment with the things His Will hath provided, patience, nay, thankfulness in the midst of tribulation, and complete reliance, in all circumstances, upon Him. These rank, according to the estimate of God, among the highest and most laudable of all acts. All other acts are, and will ever remain, secondary and subordinate unto them....

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 290

73. O SON OF SPIRIT!

Possess a pure, kindly, and radiant heart that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable, and everlasting.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Arabic #1

74. Other attributes of perfection are to fear God, to love God by loving His servants, to exercise mildness and forbearance and calm, to be sincere, amenable, clement and compassionate; to have resolution and courage, trustworthiness and energy, to strive and struggle, to be generous, loyal, without malice, to have zeal and a sense of honor, to be high-minded and magnanimous, and to have regard for the rights of others. Whoever is lacking in these excellent human qualities is defective.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 40

The Spiritual Prerequisites Of Success

75. Of the spiritual prerequisites of success, which constitute the bedrock on which the security of all plans, projects, and schemes must ultimately rest, the following stand out as preeminent and vital. Upon the extent to which these basic requirements are met, and the manner in which the believers fulfill them in their individual lives, administrative activities, and social relationships, must depend the measure of the manifold blessings which the All-Bountiful Possessor can vouchsafe to them all. These requirements are none other than a high sense of moral rectitude in their social and administrative activities, absolute chastity in their individual lives, and complete freedom from prejudice in their dealings with peoples of a different race, class, creed, or colour.

Shoghi Effendi: *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 19

The Essential Thing In Developing Good Character

76. The essential thing is firmness and steadfastness.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 696

How Should We Demonstrate Our Virtues And Character?

Some Recommendations Bahá'u'lláh Makes To All People

77. O peoples of the world! Forsake all evil, hold fast that which is good. Strive to be shining examples unto all mankind, and true reminders of the virtues of God amidst men. He that riseth to serve My Cause should manifest My wisdom, and bend every effort to banish ignorance from the earth. Be united in counsel, be one in thought. Let each morn be better than its eve and each morrow richer than its yesterday. Man's merit lieth in service and virtue and not in the pageantry of wealth and riches. Take heed that your words be purged from idle fancies and worldly desires and your deeds be cleansed from craftiness and suspicion. Dissipate not the wealth of your precious lives in the pursuit of evil and corrupt affection, nor let your endeavours be spent in promoting your personal interest. Be generous in your days of plenty, and be patient in the hour of loss. Adversity is followed by success and rejoicings follow woe. Guard against idleness and sloth, and cling unto that which profiteth mankind, whether young or old, whether high or low. Beware lest ye sow tares of dissension among men or plant thorns of doubt in pure and radiant hearts.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 137-138

A Bahá'í Is Known By His Manifested Attributes

78. A Bahá'í is known by the attributes manifested by him, not by his name: he is recognized by his character, not by his person.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Chaste and Holy Life), p. 60

The Virtues The Bahá'í Community Should Be Known By

79. Oh, friends of God! If ye will trust in the Word of God and be strong; if ye will follow the precepts of Bahá'u'lláh to tend the sick, raise the fallen, care for the poor and needy, give shelter to the destitute, protect the oppressed, comfort the sorrowful and love the world of humanity with all your hearts, then I say unto you that ere long this meeting-place will see a wonderful harvest. Day by day each member will advance and become more and more spiritual. But ye must have a firm foundation and your aims and ambitions must be clearly understood by each member. They shall be as follows:

1. To show compassion and goodwill to all mankind.
2. To render service to humanity.
3. To endeavour to guide and enlighten those in darkness.
4. To be kind to everyone, and show forth affection to every living soul.
5. To be humble in your attitude towards God, to be constant in prayer to Him, so as to grow daily nearer to God.
6. To be so faithful and sincere in all your actions that every member may be known as embodying the qualities of honesty, love, faith, kindness, generosity, and courage. To be detached from all that is not God, attracted by the Heavenly Breath--a divine soul; so that the world may know that a Bahá'í is a perfect being.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, pp. 73-74

80. Rectitude of conduct, with its implications of justice, equity, truthfulness, honesty, fair-mindedness, reliability, and trustworthiness, must distinguish every phase of the life of the Bahá'í community.

Shoghi Effendi: *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 19

81. A chaste and holy life should be regarded as an essential factor that must contribute its proper share to the strengthening and vitalization of the Bahá'í community, upon which must in turn depend the success of any Bahá'í plan or enterprise...A chaste and holy life must be made the controlling principle in the behavior and conduct of all Bahá'ís, both in their social relations with the members of their own community, and in their contact with the world at large...Such a chaste and holy life, with its implication of modesty, purity, temperance, decency, and clean-mindedness, involves no less than the exercise of moderation in all that pertains to dress, language, amusements, and all artistic and literary avocations.

Shoghi Effendi: *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 24

The Center And Base Of Character Development

82. A good character is in the sight of God and His chosen ones and the possessors of insight, the most excellent and praiseworthy of all things, but always on condition that its center of emanation should be reason and knowledge and its base should be true moderation.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 60

The Importance Of Goodly Or Benevolent Deeds

83. O CHILDREN OF ADAM!

Holy words and pure and goodly deeds ascend unto the heaven of celestial glory. Strive that your deeds may be cleansed from the dust of self and hypocrisy and find favor at the court of glory; for ere long the assayers of mankind shall, in the holy presence of the Adored One, accept naught but absolute virtue and deeds of stainless purity. This is the day-star of wisdom and of divine mystery that hath shone above the horizon of the divine will. Blessed are they that turn thereunto.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Persian #69

84. Charity is beloved and acceptable before God, and is accounted the chief among good deeds. Indeed, this blessed word is, in this connection, a sun among words. Blessed is he who prefers his brother before himself; such a one is of the people of Bahá.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 57

85. No goodly deed was or will ever be lost, for benevolent acts are treasures preserved with God for the benefit of those who act. Blessed the servant and the maidservant who have fulfilled their obligation in the path of God our Lord, the Lord of all worlds....

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Huqúqu'lláh), p. 502

86. 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. In His hand is the source of authority and He ordaineth as He willeth. He is the Supreme Ruler, the Bountiful, the Equitable, the Revealer, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Huqúqu'lláh), p. 489

Wisdom Can Only Be Demonstrated By Words

87. No man of wisdom can demonstrate his knowledge save by means of words. This showeth the significance of the Word as is affirmed in all the Scriptures, whether of former times or more recently. For it is through its potency and animating spirit that the people of the world have attained so eminent a position. Moreover words and utterances should be both impressive and penetrating. However, no word will be infused with these two qualities unless it be uttered wholly for the sake of God and with due regard unto the exigencies of the occasion and the people.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 172

The Conditions For Success In Speaking

88. Human utterance is an essence which aspireth to exert its influence and needeth moderation. As to its influence, this is conditional upon refinement which in turn is dependent upon hearts which are detached and pure. As to its moderation, this hath to be combined with tact and wisdom as prescribed in the Holy Scriptures and Tablets.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 172

89. O My Name! Utterance must needs possess penetrating power. For if bereft of this quality it would fail to exert influence. And this penetrating influence dependeth on the spirit being pure and the heart stainless. Likewise it needeth moderation, without which the hearer would be unable to bear it, rather he would manifest opposition from the very outset. And moderation will be obtained by blending utterance with the tokens of divine wisdom which are recorded in the sacred Books and Tablets. Thus when the essence of one's utterance is endowed with these two requisites it will prove highly effective and will be the prime factor in transforming the souls of men. This is the station of supreme victory and celestial dominion. Whoso attaineth thereto is invested with the power to teach the Cause of God and to prevail over the hearts and minds of men.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 198-199

The Importance Of Character For Marriage

90. Bahá'í marriage is the commitment of the two parties one to the other, and their mutual attachment of mind and heart. Each must, however, exercise the utmost care to become thoroughly acquainted with the character of the other, that the binding covenant between them may be a tie that will endure forever. Their purpose must be this: to become loving companions and comrades and at one with each other for time and eternity....

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 118

91. The friends of God must so live and conduct themselves, and evince such excellence of character and conduct, as to make others astonished. The love between husband and wife must not be purely physical, nay, rather, it must be spiritual and heavenly. These two souls should be considered as one soul. How difficult it would be to divide a single soul! Nay, great would be the difficulty!

In short, the foundation of the Kingdom of God is based upon harmony and love, oneness, relationship and union, not upon differences, especially between husband and wife....

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Family Life), p. 391

Character Should Be Shown In One’s Work

92. 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 #82

93. O MY SERVANT!

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.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Persian #80

94. All humanity must obtain a livelihood by sweat of the brow and bodily exertion; at the same time seeking to lift the burden of others, striving to be the source of comfort to souls, and facilitating the means of living. This in itself is devotion to God. But the energies of the heart must not be completely occupied with them. Though the mind is busy the heart must be attracted toward the Kingdom of God in order that the virtues of humanity may be attained from every direction and source.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 182

Character Is Shown In The Development Of Harmony And Unity

95. Exalted, immensely exalted is He Who hath removed differences and established harmony. Glorified, infinitely glorified is He Who hath caused discord to cease, and decreed solidarity and unity. Praised be God, the Pen of the Most High hath lifted distinctions from between His servants and handmaidens and, through His consummate favours and all-encompassing mercy, hath conferred upon all a station and rank on the same plane. He hath broken the back of vain imaginings with the sword of utterance and hath obliterated the perils of idle fancies through the pervasive power of His might.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Women, Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. II) (Women), p. 357

96. So it is with the great body of humanity. The wonderful Law of Attraction, Harmony and Unity, holds together this marvellous Creation.

As with the whole, so with the parts; whether a flower or a human body, when the attracting principle is withdrawn from it, the flower or the man dies. It is therefore clear that attraction, harmony, unity and Love, are the cause of life, whereas repulsion, discord, hatred and separation bring death.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 139

97. Today I am most happy, for I see here a gathering of the servants of God. I see white and black sitting together. There are no whites and blacks before God. All colors are one, and that is the color of servitude to God. Scent and color are not important. The heart is important. If the heart is pure, white or black or any color makes no difference. God does not look at colors; He looks at the hearts. He whose heart is pure is better. He whose character is better is more pleasing. He who turns more to the Abhá Kingdom is more advanced.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 44

98. Then it is evident that excellence does not depend upon color. Character is the true criterion of humanity. Anyone who possesses a good character, who has faith in God and is firm, whose actions are good, whose speech is good--that one is accepted at the threshold of God no matter what color he may be. In short--praise be to God!--you are the servants of God. The love of Bahá'u'lláh is in your hearts. Your souls are rejoicing in the glad tidings of Bahá'u'lláh. My hope is that the white and the black will be united in perfect love and fellowship, with complete unity and brotherhood. Associate with each other, think of each other, and be like a rose garden. Anyone who goes into a rose garden will see various roses, white, pink, yellow, red, all growing together and replete with adornment. Each one accentuates the beauty of the other. Were all of one color, the garden would be monotonous to the eye. If they were all white or yellow or red, the garden would lack variety and attractiveness; but when the colors are varied, white, pink, yellow, red, there will be the greatest beauty. Therefore, I hope that you will be like a rose garden. Although different in colors, yet--praise be to God!--you receive rays from the same sun. From one cloud the rain is poured upon you. You are under the training of one Gardener, and this Gardener is kind to all. Therefore, you must manifest the utmost kindness towards each other, and you may rest assured that whenever you are united, the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abhá will reach you, the heavenly favors will descend, the bounties of God will be bestowed, the Sun of Reality will shine, the cloud of mercy will pour its showers, and the breeze of divine generosity will waft its fragrances upon you.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 427-428

99. You who are the servants of God fight against oppression, hate and discord, so that wars may cease and God's laws of peace and love may be established among men.

Work! Work with all your strength, spread the Cause of the Kingdom among men; teach the self-sufficient to turn humbly towards God, the sinful to sin no more, and await with glad expectation the coming of the Kingdom.

Love and obey your Heavenly Father, and rest assured that Divine help is yours. Verily I say unto you that you shall indeed conquer the world!

Only have faith, patience and courage--this is but the beginning, but surely you will succeed, for God is with you!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 101

The Bahá’í View Towards Tobacco, Intoxicating Drink, Opium, and Hashish

100. O ye, God's loved ones! Experience hath shown how greatly the renouncing of smoking, of intoxicating drink, and of opium, conduceth to health and vigour, to the expansion and keenness of the mind and to bodily strength. There is today a people⁴ who strictly avoid tobacco, intoxicating liquor and opium. This people is far and away superior to the others, for strength and physical courage, for health, beauty and comeliness. A single one of their men can stand up to ten men of another tribe. This hath proved true of the entire people: that is, member for member, each individual of this community is in every respect superior to the individuals of other communities.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 150

101. Regarding hashish, you had pointed out that some Persians have become habituated to its use. Gracious God! This is the worst of all intoxicants, and its prohibition is explicitly revealed. Its use causeth the disintegration of thought and the complete torpor of the soul. How could anyone seek this fruit of the infernal tree, and by partaking of it, be led to exemplify the qualities of a monster? How could one use this forbidden drug, and thus deprive himself of the blessings of the All-Merciful?

Alcohol consumeth the mind and causeth man to commit acts of absurdity, but...this wicked hashish extinguisheth the mind, freezeth the spirit, petrifieth the soul, wasteth the body and leaveth man frustrated and lost.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Chaste and Holy Life), p. 55

The Relationship Between Material And Spiritual Progress

102. If a man is successful in his business, art, or profession he is thereby enabled to increase his physical wellbeing and to give his body the amount of ease and comfort in which it delights. All around us today we see how man surrounds himself with every modern convenience and luxury, and denies nothing to the physical and material side of his nature. But, take heed, lest in thinking too earnestly of the things of the body you forget the things of the soul: for material advantages do not elevate the spirit of a man. Perfection in worldly things is a joy to the body of a man but in no wise does it glorify his soul.

It may be that a man who has every material benefit, and who lives surrounded by all the greatest comfort modern civilization can give him, is denied the all important gift of the Holy Spirit.

It is indeed a good and praiseworthy thing to progress materially, but in so doing, let us not neglect the more important spiritual progress, and close our eyes to the Divine light shining in our midst.

⁴ Possibly ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was referring to the Sikhs; the description appears to apply to them.

Only by improving spiritually as well as materially can we make any real progress, and become perfect beings. It was in order to bring this spiritual life and light into the world that all the great Teachers have appeared. They came so that the Sun of Truth might be manifested, and shine in the hearts of men, and that through its wondrous power men might attain unto Everlasting Light.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, pp. 62-63

Show Love And Patience To Those Whose Thoughts Are Material And Retrograde

103. Especially to those whose thoughts are material and retrograde show the utmost love and patience, thereby winning them into the unity of fellowship by the radiance of your kindness.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 27

Bring Yourself To Account Each Day For Your Deeds

104. O SON OF BEING!

Bring thyself to account each day ere thou art summoned to a reckoning; for death, unhearded, shall come upon thee and thou shalt be called to give account for thy deeds.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Arabic #31

The Relationship Between The Teaching Work And Character Development

105. The teaching work should under all conditions be actively pursued by the believers because divine confirmations are dependent upon it. Should a Bahá’í refrain from being fully, vigorously and wholeheartedly involved in the teaching work he will undoubtedly be deprived of the blessings of the Abhá Kingdom. Even so, this activity should be tempered with wisdom--not that wisdom which requireth one to be silent and forgetful of such an obligation, but rather that which requireth one to display divine tolerance, love, kindness, patience, a goodly character, and holy deeds. In brief, encourage the friends individually to teach the Cause of God and draw their attention to this meaning of wisdom mentioned in the Writings, which is itself the essence of teaching the Faith--but all this to be done with the greatest tolerance, so that heavenly assistance and divine confirmation may aid the friends.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 268

106. Go thou straight on and persevere in His service. Say: O people! The Day, promised unto you in all the Scriptures, is now come. Fear ye God, and withhold not yourselves from recognizing the One Who is the Object of your creation. Hasten ye unto Him. Better is this for you than the world and all that is therein. Would that ye could perceive it!

Bahá’u’lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 314

The Relationship Between Health And Character Development

107. If the health and well-being of the body be expended in the path of the Kingdom, this is very acceptable and praiseworthy; and if it is expended to the benefit of the human world in general--even though it be to their material benefit and be a means of doing good--that is also acceptable. But if the health and welfare of man be spent in sensual desires, in a life on the animal plane, and in devilish pursuits--then disease is better than such health; nay, death itself is preferable to such a life. If thou art desirous of health, wish thou health for serving the Kingdom. I hope thou mayest attain a perfect insight, an inflexible resolution, a complete health and spiritual and physical strength in order that thou mayest drink from the fountain of eternal life and be assisted by the spirit of divine confirmation.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Bahá’í World Faith*, p. 376: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) (Health and Healing), pp. 469-470

108. With reference to what is meant by an individual becoming entirely forgetful of self: the intent is that he should rise up and sacrifice himself in the true sense, that is, he should obliterate the promptings of the human condition, and rid himself of such characteristics as are worthy of blame and constitute the gloomy darkness of this life on earth--not that he should allow his physical health to deteriorate and his body to become infirm.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 180

109. ...it is evident that movement is essential to all existence. All material things progress to a certain point, then begin to decline. This is the law which governs the whole physical creation.... My hope for you is that you will progress in the world of spirit, as well as in the world of matter; that your intelligence will develop, your knowledge will augment, and your understanding be widened.

You must ever press forward, never standing still; avoid stagnation, the first step to a backward movement, to decay.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, pp. 89-90

Some General Guidelines For How We Should Live Our Lives

110. Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer to the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility. We pray God to protect thee from the heat of jealousy and the cold of hatred. He verily is nigh, ready to answer."

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 93-94; *Gleanings*, p. 285

111. O friends! Be not careless of the virtues with which ye have been endowed, neither be neglectful of your high destiny. Suffer not your labors to be wasted through the vain imaginations which certain hearts have devised. Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding, the breeze that stirreth at the break of day, the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men, the letters inscribed upon His sacred scroll. With the utmost unity, and in a spirit of perfect fellowship, exert yourselves, that ye may be enabled to achieve that which beseemeth this Day of God. Verily I say, strife and dissension, and whatsoever the mind of man abhorreth are entirely unworthy of his station. Center your energies in the propagation of the Faith of God. Whoso is worthy of so high a calling, let him arise and promote it. Whoso is unable, it is his duty to appoint him who will, in his stead, proclaim this Revelation, whose power hath caused the foundations of the mightiest structures to quake, every mountain to be crushed into dust, and every soul to be dumbfounded. Should the greatness of this Day be revealed in its fullness, every man would forsake a myriad lives in his longing to partake, though it be for one moment, of its great glory--how much more this world and its corruptible treasures!

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 196-197

112. O ye who have turned your faces toward the Exalted Beauty! By night, by day, at morningtide and sunset, when darkness draweth on, and at early light I remember, and ever have remembered, in the realms of my mind and heart, the loved ones of the Lord. I beg of Him to bestow His confirmations upon those loved ones, dwellers in that pure and holy land, and to grant them successful outcomes in all things: that in their character, their behaviour, their words, their way of life, in all they are and do, He will make them to achieve distinction among men; that He will gather them into the world community, their hearts filled with ecstasy and fervour and yearning love, with knowledge and certitude, with steadfastness and unity, their faces beauteous and bright.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 259-260

113. O Lord! These are the survivors of the martyrs, that company of blessed souls. They have sustained every tribulation and displayed patience in the face of grievous injustice. They have forsaken all comfort and prosperity, have willingly submitted to dire suffering and adversity in the path of Thy love, and are still held captive in the clutches of their enemies who continually torment them with sore torment, and oppress them because they walk steadfastly in Thy straight path. There is no one to help them, no one to befriend them. Apart from the ignoble and the wicked, there is no one to associate and consort with them.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Bahá'í Prayers* (US ed.), p. 266

114. This is the time for growing; the season for joyous gathering! Take the cup of the Testament in thy hand; leap and dance with ecstasy in the triumphal procession of the Covenant! Lay your confidence in the everlasting bounty, turn to the presence of the generous God; ask assistance

from the Kingdom of Abhá; seek confirmation from the Supreme World; turn thy vision to the horizon of eternal wealth; and pray for help from the Source of Mercy!

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 351

The Results Of Striving To Turn Wholly Toward The Kingdom

115. Strive as much as ye can to turn wholly toward the Kingdom, that ye may acquire innate courage and ideal power.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 206

116. The source of courage and power is the promotion of the Word of God, and steadfastness in His Love.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 156

117. They that have kept their promises, fulfilled their obligations, redeemed their pledges and vows, rendered the Trust of God and His Right unto Him--these are numbered among the inmates of the all-highest Paradise. Thus from His mighty Prison doth the Wronged One announce unto them this glad-tiding. Blessed are the servants and maidservants that have performed their deeds and blessed is the man that hath cleaved tenaciously unto praiseworthy acts and fulfilled that which is enjoined upon him in the Book of God, the Lord of the worlds.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Compilation of Compilations* (Vol. I) Huqúqu’lláh, p. 497

Source: Huitt, W. (2005). *Becoming a Brilliant Star: Character development*. Valdosta, GA. Available online: <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/religion/bahai/brilstar/03chardv.pdf>

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