

Becoming A Brilliant Star **Citizenship: Overview**

All Men Have Been Created To Carry Forward An Ever-Advancing Civilization

1. All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. The Almighty beareth Me witness: To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Say: O friends! Drink your fill from this crystal stream that floweth through the heavenly grace of Him Who is the Lord of Names. Let others partake of its waters in My name, that the leaders of men in every land may fully recognize the purpose for which the Eternal Truth hath been revealed, and the reason for which they themselves have been created.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 215

2. Great is the station of man. Great must also be his endeavours for the rehabilitation of the world and the well-being of nations. I beseech the One true God to graciously confirm thee in that which beseemeth man's station.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 174

3. He Who is the Eternal Truth hath, from the Day Spring of Glory, directed His eyes towards the people of Bahá, and is addressing them in these words: "Address yourselves to the promotion of the well-being and tranquillity of the children of men. Bend your minds and wills to the education of the peoples and kindreds of the earth, that haply the dissensions that divide it may, through the power of the Most Great Name, be blotted out from its face, and all mankind become the upholders of one Order, and the inhabitants of one City. Illumine and hallow your hearts; let them not be profaned by the thorns of hate or the thistles of malice. Ye dwell in one world, and have been created through the operation of one Will. Blessed is he who mingleth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love."

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 333-334

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

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 167

Spiritual Or Divine Civilization Must Be Established

5. In his scriptural lesson this morning the revered doctor read a verse from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."

The light of truth has heretofore been seen dimly through variegated glasses, but now the splendors of Divinity shall be visible through the translucent mirrors of pure hearts and spirits. The light of truth is the divine teaching, heavenly instruction, merciful principles and spiritual civilization. Since my arrival in this country I find that material civilization has progressed

greatly, that commerce has attained the utmost degree of expansion; arts, agriculture and all details of material civilization have reached the highest stage of perfection, but spiritual civilization has been left behind. Material civilization is like unto the lamp, while spiritual civilization is the light of that lamp. If the material and spiritual civilization become united, then we will have the light and the lamp together, and the outcome will be perfect. For material civilization is like unto a beautiful body, and spiritual civilization is like unto the spirit of life. If that wondrous spirit of life enters this beautiful body, the body will become a channel for the distribution and development of the perfections of humanity.

Jesus Christ came to teach the people of the world this heavenly civilization and not material civilization. He breathed the breath of the Holy Spirit into the body of the world and established an illumined civilization. Among the principles of divine civilization He came to proclaim is the Most Great Peace of mankind. Among His principles of spiritual civilization is the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. Among the principles of heavenly civilization He brought is the virtue of the human world. Among the principles of celestial civilization He announced is the improvement and betterment of human morals.

Today the world of humanity is in need of international unity and conciliation. To establish these great fundamental principles a propelling power is needed. It is self-evident that the unity of the human world and the Most Great Peace cannot be accomplished through material means. They cannot be established through political power, for the political interests of nations are various and the policies of peoples are divergent and conflicting. They cannot be founded through racial or patriotic power, for these are human powers, selfish and weak. The very nature of racial differences and patriotic prejudices prevents the realization of this unity and agreement. Therefore, it is evidenced that the promotion of the oneness of the kingdom of humanity, which is the essence of the teachings of all the Manifestations of God, is impossible except through the divine power and breaths of the Holy Spirit. Other powers are too weak and incapable of accomplishing this.

For man two wings are necessary. One wing is physical power and material civilization; the other is spiritual power and divine civilization. With one wing only, flight is impossible. Two wings are essential. Therefore, no matter how much material civilization advances, it cannot attain to perfection except through the uplift of spiritual civilization.

All the Prophets have come to promote divine bestowals, to found the spiritual civilization and teach the principles of morality. Therefore, we must strive with all our powers so that spiritual influences may gain the victory. For material forces have attacked mankind. The world of humanity is submerged in a sea of materialism. The rays of the Sun of Reality are seen but dimly and darkly through opaque glasses. The penetrative power of the divine bounty is not full manifest....

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 11-12

Love Is The Fundamental Principle of God’s Purpose For Man

6. Love is the fundamental principle of God's purpose for man, and He has commanded us to love each other even as He loves us. All these discords and disputes which we hear on all sides only tend to increase materiality.

The world for the most part is sunk in materialism, and the blessings of the Holy Spirit are ignored. There is so little real spiritual feeling, and the progress of the world is for the most part

merely material. Men are becoming like unto beasts that perish, for we know that they have no spiritual feeling--they do not turn to God, they have no religion! These things belong to man alone, and if he is without them he is a prisoner of nature, and no whit better than an animal.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 122

The Distinguishing Feature of The Bahá’í Faith Is The Oneness Of Humanity

7. ... Bahá’u’lláh taught the Oneness of humanity; that is to say, all the children of men are under the mercy of the Great God. They are the sons of one God; they are trained by God. He has placed the crown of humanity on the head of every one of the servants of God. Therefore all nations and peoples must consider themselves brethren. They are all descendants from Adam. They are the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits of One Tree. They are pearls from one shell. But the children of men are in need of education and civilization, and they require to be polished, till they become bright and shining.

Man and woman both should be educated equally and equally regarded.

It is racial, patriotic, religious and class prejudice, that has been the cause of the destruction of Humanity.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*, p. 28

8. “In every Dispensation,” writes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “the light of Divine Guidance has been focussed upon one central theme.... In this wondrous Revelation, this glorious century, the foundation of the Faith of God and the distinguishing feature of His Law is the consciousness of the Oneness of Mankind.”

Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 36

Unity Must Be Established

9. O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you. Then will the effulgence of the world's great Luminary envelop the whole earth, and its inhabitants become the citizens of one city, and the occupants of one and the same throne...There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them, except a few which are the outcome of human perversity, were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose. Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you. This, verily, is the most exalted Word which the Mother Book hath sent down and revealed unto you. To this beareth witness the Tongue of Grandeur from His habitation of glory.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 114; *Gleanings*, pp. 217-218

10. The sixth Ishraq

is union and concord amongst the children of men. From the beginning of time the light of unity hath shed its divine radiance upon the world, and the greatest means for the promotion of that unity is for the peoples of the world to understand one another's writing and speech. In former Epistles We have enjoined upon the Trustees of the House of Justice either to choose one language from among those now existing or to adopt a new one, and in like manner to select a common script, both of which should be taught in all the schools of the world. Thus will the earth be regarded as one country and one home. The most glorious fruit of the tree of knowledge is this exalted word: Of one tree are all ye the fruit, and of one bough the leaves. Let not man glory in this that he loveth his country, let him rather glory in this that he loveth his kind. Concerning this We have previously revealed that which is the means of the reconstruction of the world and the unity of nations. Blessed are they that attain thereunto. Blessed are they that act accordingly.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 127-128

11. Note ye how easily, where unity existeth in a given family, the affairs of that family are conducted; what progress the members of that family make, how they prosper in the world. Their concerns are in order, they enjoy comfort and tranquillity, they are secure, their position is assured, they come to be envied by all. Such a family but addeth to its stature and its lasting honour, as day succeedeth day. And if we widen out the sphere of unity a little to include the inhabitants of a village who seek to be loving and united, who associate with and are kind to one another, what great advances they will be seen to make, how secure and protected they will be. Then let us widen out the sphere a little more, let us take the inhabitants of a city, all of them together: if they establish the strongest bonds of unity among themselves, how far they will progress, even in a brief period and what power they will exert. And if the sphere of unity be still further widened out, that is, if the inhabitants of a whole country develop peaceable hearts, and if with all their hearts and souls they yearn to cooperate with one another and to live in unity, and if they become kind and loving to one another, that country will achieve undying joy and lasting glory. Peace will it have, and plenty, and vast wealth.

Note then: if every clan, tribe, community, every nation, country, territory on earth should come together under the single-hued pavilion of the oneness of mankind, and by the dazzling rays of the Sun of Truth should proclaim the universality of man; if they should cause all nations and all creeds to open wide their arms to one another, establish a World Council, and proceed to bind the members of society one to another by strong mutual ties, what would happen then? There is no doubt whatsoever that the divine Beloved, in all His endearing beauty, and with Him a massive host of heavenly confirmations and human blessings and bestowals, would appear in His full glory before the assemblage of the world.

Wherefore, O ye beloved of the Lord, bestir yourselves, do all in your power to be as one, to live in peace, each with the others: for ye are all the drops from but one ocean, the foliage of one tree, the pearls from a single shell, the flowers and sweet herbs from the same one garden. And achieving that, strive ye to unite the hearts of those who follow other faiths.

For one another must ye give up even life itself. To every human being must ye be infinitely kind. Call none a stranger; think none to be your foe. Be ye as if all men were your close kin and honoured friends. Walk ye in such wise that this fleeting world will change into a splendour and this dismal heap of dust become a palace of delights. Such is the counsel of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, this hapless servant.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 279-280

12. The unity which is productive of unlimited results is first a unity of mankind which recognizes that all are sheltered beneath the overshadowing glory of the All-Glorious, that all are servants of one God; for all breathe the same atmosphere, live upon the same earth, move beneath the same heavens, receive effulgence from the same sun and are under the protection of one God. This is the most great unity, and its results are lasting if humanity adheres to it; but mankind has hitherto violated it, adhering to sectarian or other limited unities such as racial, patriotic or unity of self-interests; therefore, no great results have been forthcoming. Nevertheless, it is certain that the radiance and favors of God are encompassing, minds have developed, perceptions have become acute, sciences and arts are widespread, and capacity exists for the proclamation and promulgation of the real and ultimate unity of mankind, which will bring forth marvelous results. It will reconcile all religions, make warring nations loving, cause hostile kings to become friendly and bring peace and happiness to the human world. It will cement together the Orient and Occident, remove forever the foundations of war and upraise the ensign of the Most Great Peace. These limited unities are, therefore, signs of that great unity which will make all the human family one by being productive of the attractions of conscience in mankind.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 191

Work To Remove The Ramparts of Dissension

13. We trust that in a time to come the slumberers will waken, and the heedless will be made aware, and the excluded will become initiates in the mysteries. Now must the friends work on with heart and soul and put forth a mighty effort, until the ramparts of dissension are toppled down and the glories of the oneness of humanity lead all to unity.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá
Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 277

14. Now strive ye that the Collective Center of the sacred religions--for the inculcation of which all the Prophets were manifested and which is no other than the spirit of the divine teachings--be spread in all parts of America, so that each one of you may shine forth from the horizon of reality like unto the morning star, divine illumination may overcome the darkness of nature, and the world of humanity may become enlightened. This is the most great work! Should you become confirmed therein, this world will become another world, the surface of the earth will become the delectable paradise, and eternal Institutions be founded.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá
Tablets of the Divine Plan, p. 106

The Purpose of Religion Is to Establish Unity and Concord

15. The ninth Ishraq
The purpose of religion as revealed from the heaven of God's holy Will is to establish unity and concord amongst the peoples of the world; make it not the cause of dissension and strife. The religion of God and His divine law are the most potent instruments and the surest of all means for

the dawning of the light of unity amongst men. The progress of the world, the development of nations, the tranquillity of peoples, and the peace of all who dwell on earth are among the principles and ordinances of God. Religion bestoweth upon man the most precious of all gifts, offereth the cup of prosperity, imparteth eternal life, and showereth imperishable benefits upon mankind. It behoveth the chiefs and rulers of the world, and in particular the Trustees of God's House of Justice, to endeavour to the utmost of their power to safeguard its position, promote its interests and exalt its station in the eyes of the world. In like manner it is incumbent upon them to enquire into the conditions of their subjects and to acquaint themselves with the affairs and activities of the divers communities in their dominions. We call upon the manifestations of the power of God--the sovereigns and rulers on earth--to bestir themselves and do all in their power that haply they may banish discord from this world and illumine it with the light of concord.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 129-130

Universal Peace Must Be Established

16. Today the human world is in need of a great power by which these glorious principles and purposes may be executed. The cause of peace is a very great cause; it is the Cause of God, and all the forces of the world are opposed to it. Governments, for instance, consider militarism as the step to human progress, that division among men and nations is the cause of patriotism and honor, that if one nation attack and conquer another, gaining wealth, territory and glory thereby, this warfare and conquest, this bloodshed and cruelty are the cause of that victorious nation's advancement and prosperity. This is an utter mistake. Compare the nations of the world to the members of a family. A family is a nation in miniature. Simply enlarge the circle of the household, and you have the nation. Enlarge the circle of nations, and you have all humanity. The conditions surrounding the family surround the nation. The happenings in the family are the happenings in the life of the nation. Would it add to the progress and advancement of a family if dissensions should arise among its members, all fighting, pillaging each other, jealous and revengeful of injury, seeking selfish advantage? Nay, this would be the cause of the effacement of progress and advancement. So it is in the great family of nations, for nations are but an aggregate of families. Therefore, as strife and dissension destroy a family and prevent its progress, so nations are destroyed and advancement hindered.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 156-157

Environment Must Be Protected

17. Every man of discernment, while walking upon the earth, feeleth indeed abashed, inasmuch as he is fully aware that the thing which is the source of his prosperity, his wealth, his might, his exaltation, his advancement and power is, as ordained by God, the very earth which is trodden beneath the feet of all men. There can be no doubt that whoever is cognizant of this truth, is cleansed and sanctified from all pride, arrogance, and vainglory. Whatever hath been said hath come from God. Unto this, He, verily, hath borne, and beareth now, witness, and He, in truth, is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 44

18. Say: Nature in its essence is the embodiment of My Name, the Maker, the Creator. Its manifestations are diversified by varying causes, and in this diversity there are signs for men of discernment. Nature is God's Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world. It is a dispensation of Providence ordained by the Ordainer, the All-Wise. Were anyone to affirm that it is the Will of God as manifested in the world of being, no one should question this assertion. It is endowed with a power whose reality men of learning fail to grasp. Indeed a man of insight can perceive naught therein save the effulgent splendour of Our Name, the Creator. Say: This is an existence which knoweth no decay, and Nature itself is lost in bewilderment before its revelations, its compelling evidences and its effulgent glory which have encompassed the universe.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 142

19. Praise be to God, throughout succeeding centuries and ages the call of civilization hath been raised, the world of humanity hath been advancing and progressing day by day, various countries have been developing by leaps and bounds, and material improvements have increased, until the world of existence obtained universal capacity to receive the spiritual teachings and to hearken to the Divine Call. The suckling babe passeth through various physical stages, growing and developing at every stage, until its body reacheth the age of maturity. Having arrived at this stage it acquireth the capacity to manifest spiritual and intellectual perfections. The lights of comprehension, intelligence and knowledge become perceptible in it and the powers of its soul unfold. Similarly, in the contingent world, the human species hath undergone progressive physical changes and, by a slow process, hath scaled the ladder of civilization, realizing in itself the wonders, excellencies and gifts of humanity in their most glorious form, until it gained the capacity to express the splendours of spiritual perfections and divine ideals and became capable of hearkening to the call of God. Then at last the call of the Kingdom was raised, the spiritual virtues and perfections were revealed, the Sun of Reality dawned, and the teachings of the Most Great Peace, of the oneness of the world of humanity and of the universality of men, were promoted. We hope that the effulgence of these rays shall become more and more intense, and the ideal virtues more resplendent, so that the goal of this universal human process will be attained and the love of God will appear in the utmost grace and beauty and bedazzle all hearts.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 285-286

20. The honor and exaltation of every existing being depends upon causes and circumstances.

The excellency, the adornment and the perfection of the earth is to be verdant and fertile through the bounty of the clouds of springtime. Plants grow; flowers and fragrant herbs spring up; fruit-bearing trees become full of blossoms and bring forth fresh and new fruit. Gardens become beautiful, and meadows adorned; mountains and plains are clad in a green robe, and gardens, fields, villages and cities are decorated. This is the prosperity of the mineral world.

The height of exaltation and the perfection of the vegetable world is that a tree should grow on the bank of a stream of fresh water, that a gentle breeze should blow on it, that the warmth of the sun should shine on it, that a gardener should attend to its cultivation, and that day by day it should develop and yield fruit. But its real prosperity is to progress into the animal and human world, and replace that which has been exhausted in the bodies of animals and men.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 78

21. However, until material achievements, physical accomplishments and human virtues are reinforced by spiritual perfections, luminous qualities and characteristics of mercy, no fruit or result shall issue therefrom, nor will the happiness of the world of humanity, which is the ultimate aim, be attained. For although, on the one hand, material achievements and the development of the physical world produce prosperity, which exquisitely manifests its intended aims, on the other hand dangers, severe calamities and violent afflictions are imminent.

Consequently, when thou lookest at the orderly pattern of kingdoms, cities and villages, with the attractiveness of their adornments, the freshness of their natural resources, the refinement of their appliances, the ease of their means of travel, the extent of knowledge available about the world of nature, the great inventions, the colossal enterprises, the noble discoveries and scientific researches, thou wouldst conclude that civilization conduceth to the happiness and the progress of the human world. Yet shouldst thou turn thine eye to the discovery of destructive and infernal machines, to the development of forces of demolition and the invention of fiery implements, which uproot the tree of life, it would become evident and manifest unto thee that civilization is conjoined with barbarism. Progress and barbarism go hand in hand, unless material civilization be confirmed by Divine Guidance, by the revelations of the All-Merciful and by godly virtues, and be reinforced by spiritual conduct, by the ideals of the Kingdom and by the outpourings of the Realm of Might.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 283-284

Excessive Material Civilization Can Be Destructive

22. The word of God which the Supreme Pen hath recorded on the ninth leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise is this: 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. The purging of such deeply-rooted and overwhelming corruptions cannot be effected unless the peoples of the world unite in pursuit of one common aim and embrace one universal faith. Incline your ears unto the Call of this Wronged One and adhere firmly to the Lesser Peace.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 69

Human Rights Must Be Established

23. ...Baha'u'llah taught that an equal standard of human rights must be recognized and adopted. In the estimation of God all men are equal; there is no distinction or preferment for any soul in the dominion of His justice and equity.

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

24. 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. Under the laws which are to govern the world, the socialists may justly demand human rights but without resort to force and violence. The governments will enact these laws, establishing just

legislation and economics in order that all humanity may enjoy a full measure of welfare and privilege; but this will always be according to legal protection and procedure. Without legislative administration, rights and demands fail, and the welfare of the commonwealth cannot be realized. 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: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 238

25. Bahá’u’lláh came to set humanity free. His Revelation is, indeed, an invitation to freedom--freedom from want, freedom from war, freedom to unite, freedom to progress, freedom in peace and joy.

The Universal House of Justice: *Individual Rights and Freedoms in the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 32

Equality of Women and Men Must Be Established

26. In proclaiming the oneness of mankind He taught that men and women are equal in the sight of God and that there is no distinction to be made between them. The only difference between them now is due to lack of education and training. If woman is given equal opportunity of education, distinction and estimate of inferiority will disappear. The world of humanity has two wings, as it were: One is the female; the other is the male. If one wing be defective, the strong perfect wing will not be capable of flight. The world of humanity has two hands. If one be imperfect, the capable hand is restricted and unable to perform its duties. God is the Creator of mankind. He has endowed both sexes with perfections and intelligence, given them physical members and organs of sense, without differentiation or distinction as to superiority; therefore, why should woman be considered inferior? This is not according to the plan and justice of God. He has created them equal; in His estimate there is no question of sex. The one whose heart is purest, whose deeds are most perfect, is acceptable to God, male or female...

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 174

27. In ancient times and medieval ages woman was completely subordinated to man. The cause of this estimate of her inferiority was her lack of education. A woman's life and intellect were limited to the household. Glimpses of this may be found even in the Epistles of Saint Paul. In later centuries the scope and opportunities of a woman's life broadened and increased. Her mind unfolded and developed; her perceptions awakened and deepened. The question concerning her was: Why should a woman be left mentally undeveloped? Science is praiseworthy--whether investigated by the intellect of man or woman. So, little by little, woman advanced, giving increasing evidence of equal capabilities with man--whether in scientific research, political ability or any other sphere of human activity. The conclusion is evident that woman has been outdistanced through lack of education and intellectual facilities. If given the same educational opportunities or course of study, she would develop the same capacity and abilities.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 281

28. Briefly, history furnishes evidence that during the past centuries there have been great women as well as great men; but in general, owing to lack of educational advantages, women

have been restricted and deprived of opportunity to become fully qualified and representative of humankind. When given the opportunity for acquiring education, they have shown equal capacity with men. Some philosophers and writers have considered woman naturally and by creation inferior to man, claiming as a proof that the brain of man is larger and heavier than that of woman. This is frail and faulty evidence, inasmuch as small brains are often found coupled with superior intellect and large brains possessed by those who are ignorant, even imbecilic. The truth is that God has endowed all humankind with intelligence and perception and has confirmed all as His servants and children; therefore, in the plan and estimate of God there is no distinction between male or female. The soul that manifests pure deeds and spiritual graces is most precious in His sight and nearer to Him in its attainments.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 283

29. 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: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol II (Women), p. 357

Racial, Ethnic, Religious, And Other Prejudices Must Be Eliminated

30. A second characteristic principle of the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh is that which commands recognition of the oneness of the world of humanity.

Addressing all mankind, He says, “Ye are all the leaves of one tree.” There are no differences or distinctions of race among you in the sight of God. Nay, rather, all are the servants of God, and all are submerged in the ocean of His oneness. Not a single soul is bereft. On the contrary, all are the recipients of the bounties of God. Every human creature has a portion of His bestowals and a share of the effulgence of His reality. God is kind to all. Mankind are His sheep, and He is their real Shepherd. No other scriptures contain such breadth and universality of statement; no other teachings proclaim this unequivocal principle of the solidarity of humanity. As regards any possible distinctions, the utmost that Bahá’u’lláh says is that conditions among men vary, that some, for instance, are defective. Therefore, such souls must be educated in order that they may be brought to the degree of perfection. Some are sick and ailing; they must be treated and cared for until they are healed. Some are asleep; they need to be awakened. Some are immature as children; they should be helped to attain maturity. But all must be loved and cherished. The child must not be disliked simply because it is a child. Nay, rather, it should be patiently educated. The sick one must not be avoided nor slighted merely because he is ailing. Nay, rather, he must be regarded with sympathy and affection and treated until he is healed. The soul that is asleep must not be looked upon with contempt but awakened and led into the light.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 433-434

31. Again, Bahá’u’lláh declares that all forms of prejudice among mankind must be abandoned and that until existing prejudices are entirely removed, the world of humanity will not and cannot

attain peace, prosperity and composure. This principle cannot be found in any other sacred volume than the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 434

32. Man must cut himself free from all prejudice and from the result of his own imagination, so that he may be able to search for truth unhindered. Truth is one in all religions, and by means of it the unity of the world can be realized.

All the peoples have a fundamental belief in common. Being one, truth cannot be divided, and the differences that appear to exist among the nations only result from their attachment to prejudice. If only men would search out truth, they would find themselves united.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p.129

33. Concerning the prejudice of race: it is an illusion, a superstition pure and simple! For God created us all of one race. There were no differences in the beginning, for we are all descendants of Adam. In the beginning, also, there were no limits and boundaries between the different lands; no part of the earth belonged more to one people than to another. In the sight of God there is no difference between the various races. Why should man invent such a prejudice? How can we uphold war caused by an illusion?

God has not created men that they should destroy one another. All races, tribes, sects and classes share equally in the Bounty of their Heavenly Father.

The only difference lies in the degree of faithfulness, of obedience to the laws of God. There are some who are as lighted torches, there are others who shine as stars in the sky of humanity. The lovers of mankind, these are the superior men, of whatever nation, creed, or colour they may be. For it is they to whom God will say these blessed words, ‘Well done, My good and faithful servants’. In that day He will not ask, ‘Are you English, French, or perhaps Persian? Do you come from the East, or from the West?’

The only division that is real is this: There are heavenly men and earthly men; self-sacrificing servants of humanity in the love of the Most High, bringing harmony and unity, teaching peace and goodwill to men. On the other hand there are those selfish men, haters of their brethren, in whose hearts prejudice has replaced loving kindness, and whose influence breeds discord and strife.

To which race or to which colour belong these two divisions of men, to the White, to the Yellow, to the Black, to the East or to the West, to the North or to the South? If these are God's divisions, why should we invent others?

‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, pp.148-149

Consultation Is A Cause Of Awareness And Awakening And Leads To Well-Being

34. In all things it is necessary to consult. This matter should be forcibly stressed by thee, so that consultation may be observed by all. The intent of what hath been revealed from the Pen of the Most High is that consultation may be fully carried out among the friends, inasmuch as it is and will always be a cause of awareness and of awakening and a source of good and well-being.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Consultation), p. 93

35. The Great Being saith: The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion. Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 168

36. Say: no man can attain his true station except through his justice. No power can exist except through unity. No welfare and no well-being can be attained except through consultation.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Consultation), p. 93

37. Consultation bestoweth greater awareness and transmuteth conjecture into certitude. It is a shining light which, in a dark world, leadeth the way and guideth. For everything there is and will continue to be a station of perfection and maturity. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Consultation), p. 93

Dispute Not With Any One

38. Consort with all men, O people of Bahá, in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship. If ye be aware of a certain truth, if ye possess a jewel, of which others are deprived, share it with them in a language of utmost kindness and good-will. If it be accepted, if it fulfill its purpose, your object is attained. If anyone should refuse it, leave him unto himself, and beseech God to guide him. Beware lest ye deal unkindly with him. 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: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 15

39. Dispute not with any one concerning the things of this world and its affairs, for God hath abandoned them to such as have set their affection upon them. Out of the whole world He hath chosen for Himself the hearts of men--hearts which the hosts of revelation and of utterance can subdue. Thus hath it been ordained by the Fingers of Bahá, upon the Tablet of God's irrevocable decree, by the behest of Him Who is the Supreme Ordainer, the All-Knowing.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 279

40. Strife and conflict befit the beasts of the wild. It was through the grace of God and with the aid of seemly words and praiseworthy deeds that the unsheathed swords of the Bábi community were returned to their scabbards. Indeed through the power of good words, the righteous have always succeeded in winning command over the meads of the hearts of men. Say, O ye loved ones! Do not forsake prudence. Incline your hearts to the counsels given by the Most Exalted Pen and beware lest your hands or tongues cause harm unto anyone among mankind.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 85

41. ...Christ was a divine Center of unity and love. Whenever discord prevails instead of unity, wherever hatred and antagonism take the place of love and spiritual fellowship, Antichrist reigns instead of Christ. Who is right in these controversies and hatreds between the sects? Did Christ command them to love or to hate each other? He loved even His enemies and prayed in the hour

of His crucifixion for those who killed Him. Therefore, to be a Christian is not merely to bear the name of Christ and say, "I belong to a Christian government." To be a real Christian is to be a servant in His Cause and Kingdom, to go forth under His banner of peace and love toward all mankind, to be self-sacrificing and obedient, to become quickened by the breaths of the Holy Spirit, to be mirrors reflecting the radiance of the divinity of Christ, to be fruitful trees in the garden of His planting, to refresh the world by the water of life of His teachings--in all things to be like Him and filled with the spirit of His love.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 6

Communities Must Protect the Rights of Individuals

42. To recapitulate: the constitution of the communities depends upon justice, not upon forgiveness. Then what Christ meant by forgiveness and pardon is not that, when nations attack you, burn your homes, plunder your goods, assault your wives, children and relatives, and violate your honor, you should be submissive in the presence of these tyrannical foes and allow them to perform all their cruelties and oppressions. No, the words of Christ refer to the conduct of two individuals toward each other: if one person assaults another, the injured one should forgive him. But the communities must protect the rights of man. So if someone assaults, injures, oppresses and wounds me, I will offer no resistance, and I will forgive him. But if a person wishes to assault Siyyid Manshadi,¹ certainly I will prevent him. Although for the malefactor noninterference is apparently a kindness, it would be an oppression to Manshadi. If at this moment a wild Arab were to enter this place with a drawn sword, wishing to assault, wound and kill you, most assuredly I would prevent him. If I abandoned you to the Arab, that would not be justice but injustice. But if he injure me personally, I would forgive him.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 270-271

America As a Leader of Unity

43. America has arisen to spread the teachings of peace, to increase the illumination of humankind and bestow happiness and prosperity upon the children of men. These are the principles and evidences of divine civilization. America is a noble nation, the standard-bearer of peace throughout the world, shedding light to all regions. Foreign nations are not untrammled and free from intrigues and complications like the United States; therefore, they are not able to bring about universal harmony. But America--praise be to God!--is at peace with all the world and is worthy of raising the flag of brotherhood and international agreement. When this is done, the rest of the world will accept. All nations will join in adopting the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revealed more than fifty years ago. In His Epistles He asked the parliaments of the world to send their wisest and best men to an international world conference which should decide all questions between the peoples and establish universal peace. This would be the highest court of appeal, and the parliament of man so long dreamed of by poets and idealists would be realized. Its accomplishment would be more far-reaching than the Hague tribunal.

‘Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 388-389

¹ Cf. Matt. 5:39.

Be Unrestrained As the Wind While Carrying God's Message

44. Be unrestrained as the wind, while carrying the Message of Him Who hath caused the Dawn of Divine Guidance to break. Consider, how the wind, faithful to that which God hath ordained, bloweth upon all the regions of the earth, be they inhabited or desolate. Neither the sight of desolation, nor the evidences of prosperity, can either pain or please it. It bloweth in every direction, as bidden by its Creator. So should be every one that claimeth to be a lover of the one true God. It behoveth him to fix his gaze upon the fundamentals of His Faith, and to labor diligently for its propagation. Wholly for the sake of God he should proclaim His Message, and with that same spirit accept whatever response his words may evoke in his hearer. He who shall accept and believe, shall receive his reward; and he who shall turn away, shall receive none other than his own punishment.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 339

Source: Huitt, W. (2011). *Becoming a Brilliant Star: Citizenship: Overview*. Valdosta, GA. Available online at <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/religion/bahai/brilstar/09citizen1-overview.pdf>