



SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

GUIDANCE FOUND IN THE BAHA'I WRITINGS

Reflect on the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words, at once complex and subtle. **Quite apart from the already formidable obstacles to employment and service that certain fanatical elements have placed in your path, a host of negative forces, generated by the materialism and corruption so widespread in the world, present yet a further challenge in upholding the Bahá’í standard of conduct with respect to financial affairs.** Nevertheless, following in the footsteps of your spiritual forebears, you remain undaunted, striving sincerely to reinforce within your families, particularly in your children, attitudes towards material wealth founded on Divine guidance. The members of the younger generation would do well to ponder the above statement of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in which He conditions the acquisition of wealth on diligent work and the grace of God.

Let them weigh carefully in their hearts and minds the difference between gaining wealth through earnest effort in fields such as agriculture, commerce, the arts, and industry, on the one hand, and, on the other, obtaining it without exertion or through dishonourable means. Let them consider the consequences of each for the spiritual development of the individual, as well as the progress of society, and **ask themselves what possibilities exist for generating income and acquiring wealth that will draw down confirmations from on high. It will surely become evident, as they do so, that what will attract God’s blessings and ensure true happiness both in this world and in the next is the development of spiritual qualities, such as honesty, trustworthiness, generosity, justice, and consideration for others, and the recognition that material means are to be expended for the betterment of the world.**

- 2 April 2010 – To a Believer in the Cradle of the Faith – Universal House of Justice

FINANCIAL SOLVENCY

The Writings Guide Us On The Importance Of Financial Solvency.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá has indicated, . . . that “wealth is praiseworthy in the highest degree, if it is acquired by an individual’s own efforts and the grace of God, in commerce, agriculture, crafts and industry”, if the measures adopted by the individual in generating wealth serve to “enrich the generality of the people”, and if the wealth thus obtained is expended for “philanthropic purposes” and “the promotion of knowledge”, for the establishment of schools and industry and the advancement of education, and in general for the welfare of society.

Referring to the exigencies of the material world, Bahá'u'lláh has affirmed that to every end has been assigned a means for its accomplishment. A natural conclusion to be drawn from reflection on this fundamental principle is that vigilance must be exercised in distinguishing “means” from “ends”; otherwise, what is intended as a mere instrument could easily become the very goal of an individual's life. The acquisition of wealth is a case in point; it is acceptable and praiseworthy to the extent that it serves as a means for achieving higher ends—for meeting one's basic necessities, for fostering the progress of one's family, for promoting the welfare of society, and for contributing to the establishment of a world civilization. But to make the accumulation of wealth the central purpose of one's life is unworthy of any human being.

An idea closely related to the above, and well in accord with the spirit of the Bahá'í teachings, is that the end does not serve to justify the means. However constructive and noble the goal, however significant to one's life or to the welfare of one's family, it must not be attained through improper means. Regrettably, a number of today's leaders—political, social, and religious—as well as some of the directors of financial markets, executives of multinational corporations, chiefs of commerce and industry, and ordinary people who succumb to social pressure and ignore the call of their conscience, act against this principle; they justify any means ...

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice will be attained only when every member of society enjoys a relative degree of material prosperity and gives due regard to the acquisition of spiritual qualities. The solution, then, to prevailing economic difficulties is to be sought as much in the application of spiritual principles as in the implementation of scientific methods and approaches. The family unit offers an ideal setting within which can be shaped those moral attributes that contribute to an appropriate view of material wealth and its utilization.

The key to resolving these social ills rests in the hands of a youthful generation convinced of the nobility of human beings; eagerly seeking a deeper understanding of the true purpose of existence; able to distinguish between divine religion and mere superstition; clear in the view of science and religion as two independent yet complementary systems of knowledge that propel human progress; conscious of and drawn to the beauty and power of unity in diversity; secure in the knowledge that real glory is to be found in service to one's country and to the peoples of the world; and mindful that the acquisition of wealth is praiseworthy only insofar as it is attained through just means and expended for benevolent purposes, for the promotion of knowledge and toward the common good. Thus, must our precious youth prepare themselves to shoulder the tremendous responsibilities that await them. And thus, will they prove immune to the atmosphere of greed that surrounds them and press forward unwavering in the pursuit of their exalted goals.

It is our hope that, as you consult on these matters with friends, relatives, neighbours and co-workers, you will find yourselves increasingly able to contribute to the social and economic development of your country and to the welfare and prosperity of all. We will offer prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of the noble people of Iran and for the continued success of your endeavours.

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DESTRUCTIVE FORCES

Today the world is assailed by an array of destructive forces. **Materialism, rooted in the West, has now spread to every corner of the planet, breeding, in the name of a strong global economy and human welfare, a culture of consumerism. It skillfully and ingeniously promotes a habit of consumption that seeks to satisfy the basest and most selfish desires, while encouraging the expenditure of wealth so as to prolong and exacerbate social conflict. How vain and foolish a worldview!**