

Selected Writings on the Conduct, Virtues, and Consultation

1 “This is the Day whereon the Ocean of God's **mercy** hath been
2 manifested unto men, **the Day** in which the Day Star of His **loving-**
3 **kindness** hath shed its radiance upon them, **the Day** in which the clouds
4 of His **bountiful favor** have overshadowed the whole of mankind.

5 *Now is the time to cheer and refresh the down-cast through the*
6 *invigorating breeze of **love** and **fellowship**, and the living*
7 *waters of **friendliness** and **charity**.*

8 They who are the beloved of God, in whatever place they gather and
9 whomsoever they may meet, must evince, in their attitude towards
10 God, and in the manner of their celebration of His praise and glory, such
11 **humility** and **submissiveness** that every atom of the dust beneath their
12 feet may attest the depth of their devotion. The conversation carried on
13 by these holy souls should be informed with such power that these
14 same atoms of dust will be thrilled by its influence. They should conduct
15 themselves in such manner that the earth upon which they tread may
16 never be allowed to address them such words as these: "I am to be
17 preferred above you....

18 *Show **forbearance** and **benevolence** and **love** to one another.*
19 ***Should any one amongst you be incapable of grasping a***
20 ***certain truth, or be striving to comprehend it, show forth,***
21 ***when conversing with him, a spirit of **extreme kindliness** and***
22 ***good-will.** Help him to see and recognize the truth, without*
23 *esteeming yourself to be, in the least, superior to him, or to be*
24 *possessed of greater endowments.*

25 The whole duty of man in this Day is to attain that share of the flood of
26 grace which God poureth forth for him. **Let none, therefore, consider**
27 **the largeness or smallness of the receptacle. The portion of some**
28 **might lie in the palm of a man's hand, the portion of others might fill a**
29 **cup, and of others even a gallon-measure.** Every eye, in this Day, should
30 seek what will best promote the Cause of God. He, Who is the Eternal
31 Truth, beareth Me witness!

32 ***Nothing whatever can, in this Day, inflict a greater harm upon this***
33 ***Cause than dissension and strife, contention, estrangement and***
34 ***apathy, among the loved ones of God.** Flee them, through the power*
35 *of God and His sovereign aid, and strive to knit together the hearts of*
36 *men, in His Name, the Unifier, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."*

Definitions

[**charity** - the voluntary giving of help]

[**dissention** – disagreement that leads to discord]

[**strife** – anger and bitter disagreement over fundamental issues; conflict; wrangling, argument]

[**contention** – heated disagreement, hostility, friction, argument, discord]

[**estrangement**- the fact of no longer being on friendly terms or part of a social group, unfriendliness]

[**apathy** - lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern; indifference]

[**inescapable**- unable to be avoided or denied]

[**extirpate** - root out and destroy completely.

Selected Writings on the Conduct, Virtues, and Consultation

37 “Beseech ye the one true God to grant that ye may taste the savor of such deeds as are
38 performed in His path, and partake of the **sweetness** of such **humility** and **submissiveness** as are
39 shown for His sake.

40 *Forget your own selves, and turn your eyes towards your neighbor. Bend your*
41 *energies to whatever may foster the education of men. Nothing is, or can ever*
42 *be, hidden from God. If ye follow in His way, His incalculable and imperishable*
43 *blessings will be showered upon you.*

44 This is the luminous Tablet, whose verses have streamed from the moving Pen of Him Who is the
45 Lord of all worlds. Ponder it in your hearts, and be of them that observe its precepts.”ⁱ

46 **“..If any discrimination is at all to be tolerated it should be a discrimination not against but**
47 **rather in favour of the minority**, be it racial or otherwise. Unlike the nations and peoples of the
48 earth be they of the East or of the West, democratic or authoritarian, communist or capitalist,
49 whether belonging to the Old World or the new, who either ignore, trample upon or extirpate,
50 the racial, religious or political minorities within the sphere of their jurisdiction,

51 *every organized community enlisted under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh should feel*
52 *it to be its **first and inescapable obligation to nurture, encourage, and***
53 ***safeguard every minority** belonging to any Faith, race, class or nation within it.*

54 So great and vital is this principle that in such circumstances as when an equal number of ballots
55 have been cast in an election, or where the qualifications for any office are balanced as between
56 the various races, Faiths or nationalities within the community priority should unhesitatingly be
57 accorded the party representing the minority and this for no other reason except to stimulate
58 and encourage it and afford it an opportunity to further the interests of the community...”ⁱⁱ

59 “In this Cause consultation is of vital importance, but **spiritual conference and not the mere**
60 **voicing of personal views is intended.**”ⁱⁱⁱ

61 “When ye enter the spiritual meeting of Consultation, chant the following commune, your hearts
62 beating with the love of God and your tongues purified from aught else save the commemoration
63 of God; so that the Most Mighty Power may confirm you by the greatest assistance:

64 *O my God! O my God! We are servants who have sincerely turned our faces unto*
65 *Thy grand face, severed ourselves from all else save Thee in this great day and*
66 *are assembled together in this glorious meeting, of one accord and desire, and*
67 *unanimous in thought to promulgate Thy Word amid Thy creatures.*^{iv}”

Selected Writings on the Conduct, Virtues, and Consultation

68 "The Bahá'ís must learn to forget personalities and to overcome the desire—so natural in
69 people—to take sides and fight about it. They must also learn to really make use of the great
70 principle of consultation." ^v

71 "Settle all things, both great and small, by consultation. Without prior consultation, take no
72 important step in your own personal affairs. Concern yourselves with one another. Help along
73 one another's projects and plans. Grieve over one another. Let none in the whole country go in
74 need. Befriend one another until ye become as a single body, one and all..."^{vi}

75 "If five people meet together to seek for truth, they must begin by cutting themselves free from
76 all their own special conditions and renouncing all preconceived ideas. In order to find truth we
77 must give up our prejudices, our own small trivial notions; an open receptive mind is essential. If
78 our chalice is full of self, there is no room in it for the water of life. The fact that we imagine
79 ourselves to be right and everybody else wrong is the greatest of all obstacles in the path towards
80 unity, and unity is necessary if we would reach truth, for truth is one."^{vii}

81 **"The second principle is that of detachment in consultation.** The members of an Assembly must
82 learn to express their views frankly, calmly, without passion or rancour.

83 *They must also learn to listen to the opinions of their fellow members without*
84 *taking offence or belittling the views of another. Bahá'í consultation is not an*
85 *easy process. It requires **love, kindliness, moral courage and humility.***

86 Thus no member should ever allow himself to be prevented from expressing frankly his view
87 because it may offend a fellow member; and, realizing this, no member should take offence at
88 another member's statements."^{viii}

89 "It is incumbent upon everyone to observe God's holy commandments, inasmuch as they are the
90 wellspring of life unto the world. **The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two**
91 **luminaries of consultation and compassion** and the canopy of world order is upraised upon the
92 two pillars of reward and punishment."^{ix}

93 *"The purpose is to emphasize the statement that consultation must have for its*
94 *object the **investigation of truth.***

95 **He who expresses an opinion should not voice it as correct and right but set it forth as a**
96 **contribution** to the consensus of opinion, for the light of reality becomes apparent when two
97 opinions coincide. A spark is produced when flint and steel come together.

Selected Writings on the Conduct, Virtues, and Consultation

Man should weigh his opinions with the utmost serenity, calmness and composure. Before expressing his own views he should carefully consider the views already advanced by others. **If he finds that a previously expressed opinion is more true and worthy, he should accept it immediately and not willfully hold to an opinion of his own. By this excellent method he endeavors to arrive at unity and truth.**

Opposition and division are deplorable. It is better then to have the opinion of a wise, sagacious man; otherwise, contradiction and altercation, in which varied and divergent views are presented, will make it necessary for a judicial body to render decision upon the question.

Even a majority opinion or consensus may be incorrect. A thousand people may hold to one view and be mistaken, whereas one sagacious person may be right.

*Therefore, true consultation is spiritual conference in the attitude and atmosphere of love. Members must love each other in the spirit of fellowship in order that good results may be forthcoming. **Love and fellowship are the foundation.***"^x

"So they (members) must confer and consult in such a way that neither disagreement nor abhorrence may occur. When meeting for consultation, each must use perfect liberty in stating his views and unveiling the proof of his demonstration. **If another contradicts him, he must not become excited because if there be no investigation or verification of questions and matters, the agreeable view will not be discovered neither understood.** The brilliant light which comes from the collision of thoughts is the "lightener" of facts."^{xi}

1. Be ye **loving fathers** to the orphan, and
2. a **refuge** to the helpless, and
3. a **treasury** for the poor, and
4. a **cure** for the ailing.
5. Be ye the **helpers** of every victim of oppression,
6. the **patrons** of the disadvantaged.
7. Think ye at all times of rendering some service to every member of the human race.
8. Pay ye no heed
 - to aversion and rejection,
 - to disdain, hostility, injustice:
 - act ye in the opposite way.
9. Be ye sincerely kind, not in appearance only."^{xii}

"Among the teachings of Baha'u'llah is one requiring man, under all conditions and circumstances, to be forgiving, to love his enemy and to consider an ill-wisher as a well-wisher.

Selected Writings on the Conduct, Virtues, and Consultation

Not that he should consider one as being an enemy and then put up with him, or to simply endure him, or to consider one as inimical and be forbearing toward him. This is declared to be hypocrisy. This love is not real.

Nay, rather, you must see your enemies as friends, ill-wishers as well-wishers and treat them accordingly. That is to say, your love and kindness must be real. Your well-wishing must be reality, not merely forbearance, for forbearance, if not of the heart, is hypocrisy.^{xiii}

Abdul’Baha’s Farewell Address

“These are the days of my farewell to you, for I am sailing on the fifth of the month. Wherever I went in this country, I returned always to New York City. This is my fourth or fifth visit here, and now I am going away to the Orient. It will be difficult for me to visit this country again except it be the will of God. I must, therefore, give you my instructions and exhortations today, and these are none other than the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh.

1. You must **manifest** complete love and affection toward all mankind.
2. Do not exalt yourselves above others, but **consider** all as your equals, **recognizing** them as the servants of one God.
3. **Know** that God is compassionate toward all; therefore,
 - **love** all from the depths of your hearts,
 - **prefer** all religionists before yourselves,
 - **be filled** with love for every race, and
 - **be kind** toward the people of all nationalities.
4. **Never speak** disparagingly of others, but
5. **praise** without distinction.
6. **Pollute not** your tongues by speaking evil of another.
7. **Recognize** your enemies as friends, and
8. **consider** those who wish you evil as the wishers of good.
9. You **must not see** evil as evil and then compromise with your opinion, for to treat in a smooth, kindly way one whom you consider evil or an enemy is hypocrisy, and this is not worthy or allowable.
10. You **must consider** your enemies as your friends,
11. **look** upon your evil-wishers as your well-wishers and treat them accordingly.
12. **Act** in such a way that your heart may be free from hatred.
13. **Let** not your heart be offended with anyone.
14. If some one commits an error and wrong toward you, you must instantly **forgive** him.
15. **Do not complain** of others.
16. **Refrain** from reprimanding them, and if you wish to give admonition or advice, let it be offered in such a way that it will not burden the bearer.

Selected Writings on the Conduct, Virtues, and Consultation

170 17. **Turn** all your thoughts toward **bringing joy** to hearts.

171 18. **Beware!** Beware! lest ye offend any heart.

172 19. **Assist** the world of humanity as much as possible.

173 20. **Be the source** of consolation to every sad one,

174 21. **assist** every weak one,

175 22. **be helpful** to every indigent one,

176 23. **care** for every sick one,

177 24. **be the cause of glorification** to every lowly one, and

178 25. **shelter** those who are overshadowed by fear.

179 **In brief, let each one of you be as a lamp shining forth with the light of the virtues of the world**
180 **of humanity. Be**

181 26. trustworthy,

182 27. sincere,

183 28. affectionate and

184 29. replete with chastity.

185 30. Be illumined,

186 31. be spiritual,

187 32. be divine,

188 33. be glorious,

189 34. be quickened of God,

190 35. be a Bahá'í.^{xiv}

SHOGHI EFFENDI

- 193 • *“Not by merely imitating the excesses and laxity of the extravagant age they live in;*
- 194 *• not by the idle neglect of the sacred responsibilities it is their privilege to shoulder;*
- 195 *• not by the silent compromise of the principles dearly cherished by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá;*
- 196 *• not by their fear or unpopularity or their dread of censure*

198 can they hope to **rouse society** from its spiritual lethargy, and **serve as a model** to a civilization the
199 foundations of which the corrosion of prejudice has well-nigh undermined.

200
201 By

202 1. the sublimity of their *principles*,

203 2. the warmth of their *love*,

204 3. the spotless purity of their *character*, and

205 4. the depth of their *devoutness* and *piety*,

206 5. let them *demonstrate* to their fellow-countrymen *the ennobling reality of a power* that shall
207 weld a disrupted world.

208
209 We can prove ourselves worthy of our Cause only if in our individual conduct and corporate life
210 we sedulously imitate the example of our beloved Master, Whom the terrors of tyranny, the

Selected Writings on the Conduct, Virtues, and Consultation

211 storms of incessant abuse, the oppressiveness of humiliation, never caused to deviate a hair's
212 breadth from the revealed Law of Bahá'u'lláh.

213 *Such is the path of servitude, such is the way of holiness He chose to tread to the*
214 *very end of His life. **Nothing short of the strictest adherence to His glorious***
215 ***example can safely steer our course amid the pitfalls of this perilous age, and***
216 ***lead us on to fulfill our high destiny.***^{xv}

217 "Consequently the Divinity of God, which is the sum of all perfections, reflects itself in the reality
218 of man; that is to say, the Essence of Oneness is the gathering of all perfections, and from this
219 unity He casts a reflection upon the human reality. Man then is the perfect mirror facing the Sun
220 of Truth, and is the center of radiation: the Sun of Truth shines in this mirror.

221 The reflection of the divine perfections appears in the reality of man, so he is the
222 representative of God, the messenger of God. If man did not exist, the universe would
223 be without result, for the object of existence is the appearance of the perfections of
224 God."^{xvi}

225 **Man is said to be the greatest representative of God**, and he is the Book of Creation because all
226 the mysteries of beings exist in him. If he comes under the shadow of the True Educator and is
227 rightly trained, he becomes the essence of essences, the light of lights, the spirit of spirits; he
228 becomes the center of the divine appearances, the source of spiritual qualities, the rising-place of
229 heavenly lights, and the receptacle of divine inspirations. **If he is deprived of this education he**
230 **becomes the manifestation of satanic qualities, the sum of animal vices, and the source of all**
231 **dark conditions.**^{xvii}
232

ⁱ Baha'u'llah, Gleanings and also (Compilations, Baha'i World Faith, p. 125)

ⁱⁱ (Shoghi Effendi: The Advent of Divine Justice, pp.28-29)

ⁱⁱⁱ (Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 72)

^{iv} (Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 2)

^v (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, To the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria, 30 June 1949)

^{vi} (From a Tablet, translated from the Persian)

^{vii} (Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 136)

^{viii} (Compilations, Lights of Guidance, p. 179)

^{ix} (Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 126)

^x (Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 72)

^{xi} (Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 406)

^{xii} Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha.

^{xiii} Star of the West, Volume 3, p. 191.

Selected Writings on the Conduct, Virtues, and Consultation

^{xiv} Abdul’Baha, PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE, PG 470, 2 December 1912. Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Kinney, 780 West End Avenue, New York, Notes by Edna McKinney

^{xv} Shoghi Effendi- April 12, 1927, Letter to the National Spiritual Assemblies of US and Canada

^{xvi} (Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 310)

^{xvii} (Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 332)