

Favoring the “Pupil of the Eye”

Second Pupil of the Eye Conference, June 18th, 2020

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom
come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...

The two great apostles, St. Peter and St. John the Evangelist, were once simple, humble workmen, toiling for their daily bread. By the **Power of the Holy Spirit their souls were illumined**, and they received the eternal blessings of the Lord Christ.

Abdu'l-Baha, [PARIS TALKS]

We understand that the Holy Spirit is the energizing factor in the life of man. **Whosoever receives this power is able to influence all with whom he comes into contact...**

A humble man without learning, but filled with the Holy Spirit, is more powerful than the most nobly-born profound scholar without that inspiration. **He who is educated by the Divine Spirit can, in his time, lead others to receive the same Spirit.**

Abdu'l-Baha [PARIS TALKS]

Peter was a fisherman and Mary Magdalene a peasant, but as they were **specially favored** with the blessings of Christ, the horizon of their faith became illumined, and down to the present day they are shining from the horizon of everlasting glory. **In this station**, merit and capacity are not to be considered; nay rather, the resplendent rays of the Sun of Truth, which have illumined these mirrors, must be taken into account.

Selections of the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha

Jesus Christ, addressing Peter, said, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.” This utterance was indicative of the faith of Peter, signifying: This faith of thine, O Peter, is **the very cause and message of unity** to the nations; it shall be the bond of union between the hearts of men and the **foundation of the oneness of the world of humanity**.

Promulgation of Universal Peace

The beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi has stated in the Bahá'í Faith, "...the primacy of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, is upheld and defended." And indicates that "Peter is recognized as one whom God has caused, according to Bahá'u'lláh, "the **mysteries of wisdom and of utterance to flow out of his mouth.**"

The Promised Day is Come

After the martyrdom of Christ, to Whom be glory, the disciples were greatly disturbed and disheartened. Even Peter had denied Christ and tried to shun Him. It was a woman, Mary Magdalene, who confirmed the wavering disciples in their faith, saying, “Was it the body of Christ or the reality of Christ that ye have seen crucified? Surely it was His body. His reality is everlasting and eternal; it hath neither beginning nor ending. Therefore, why are ye perplexed and discouraged? Christ always spoke of His being crucified.” **Mary Magdalene was a mere villager, a peasant woman; yet she became the means of consolation and confirmation to the disciples of Christ.**

Promulgation of Universal Peace

Mary Magdalene was a villager of lowly type, yet that selfsame Mary was **transformed** and became the **means through which the confirmation of God descended** upon the disciples. Verily, she served the Kingdom of God with such efficiency that she became well-known and oft mentioned by the tongues of men. Even today she is shining from the horizon of eternal majesty. Consider how infinite is the bounty of God that a woman such as Mary Magdalene should be selected by God to become the **channel of confirmation** to the disciples and a light of nearness in His Kingdom.

Promulgation of Universal Peace

The disciples gave up their free will and aligned their will with the Will of God

After the death of Christ the disciples were troubled, and their ideas and thoughts were discordant and contradictory; **later they became firm and united**, and at the feast of Pentecost they gathered together and detached themselves from the things of this world. Disregarding themselves, they renounced their comfort and worldly happiness, sacrificing their body and soul to the Beloved, abandoning their houses, and becoming wanderers and homeless, even forgetting their own existence. **Then they received the help of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit became manifested**; the spirituality of Christ triumphed, and the love of God reigned. They were given help at that time and dispersed in different directions, teaching the Cause of God, and giving forth proofs and evidences.

So the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles means their attraction by the Christ Spirit, whereby they acquired stability and firmness. Through the spirit of the love of God they gained a new life, and they saw Christ living, helping and protecting them. **They were like drops, and they became seas; they were like feeble insects, and they became majestic eagles; they were weak and became powerful. They were like mirrors facing the sun; verily, some of the light became manifest in them.**

The spiritual endowments of Africa derive naturally from the creative forces universally released by the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, but these have been marvelously enhanced by the continent's direct associations with the Channels of such forces: the ship transporting the Blessed Beauty on His exile to the Holy Land touched briefly its northern shores; the Center of the Covenant spent extended periods in Egypt before and after His historic visit to the West. The continent was also twice crossed from south to north by the beloved Guardian. **Bahá'u'lláh FAVORED the black peoples by making a specific reference to them when, as the Master testified, He compared them to the "black pupil of the eye" through which "the light of the spirit shineth forth."**

Universal House of Justice Ridvan 153 (1996).

Abdu'l-Baha has indicated that in the station of being favored:

In this station, **merit and capacity are not to be considered**; nay rather, the resplendent rays of the Sun of Truth, which have illumined these mirrors, must be taken into account.

Selections of the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha

So Abdu'l-Baha says:

Thou art even as the pupil of the eye, **the very wellspring of the light**, for God's love hath cast its rays upon thine inmost being and thou hast turned thy face toward the Kingdom of thy Lord.

And again:

Thou art like unto the pupil of the eye which is dark in color, yet it is the **fount of light and the revealer of the contingent world**.

Here's another one:

“Bahá'u'lláh,” ‘Abdu'l Bahá moreover has said, “once compared the colored people to the black pupil of the eye surrounded by the white. In this black pupil is seen the **reflection of that which is before it**, and through it the light of the spirit shineth forth.”

“Make My love thy treasure and cherish it even as thy very **sight and life.**”

Bahá'u'lláh

“O Thou Who art the apple of Mine eye!” Bahá'u'lláh, in His own handwriting, thus addresses ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, “My glory, the ocean of My loving-kindness, the sun of My bounty, the heaven of My mercy rest upon Thee. We pray God to illumine the world through Thy knowledge and wisdom...”

Bahá'u'lláh, World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'u'lláh claims to be the fulfillment of the covenant established by all of the prophets of the past concerning a great day in the future when all of God's promises will be fulfilled. "The Revelation which, from time immemorial, hath been acclaimed as the Purpose and Promise of all the Prophets of God, and the most cherished Desire of His Messengers, hath now, by virtue of the pervasive Will of the Almighty and at His irresistible bidding, been revealed unto men.

Gleanings of Bahá'u'lláh

And again Bahá'u'lláh says:

Great indeed is this Day! The allusions made to it in all the sacred Scriptures as the Day of God attest its greatness. The soul of every Prophet of God, of every Divine Messenger, hath thirsted for this wondrous Day. All the divers kindreds of the earth have, likewise, yearned to attain it.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings

“The holy realities of the Concourse on high,” writes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “yearn, in this day, in the Most Exalted Paradise, to return unto this world, so that they may be aided to render some service to the threshold of the Abhá Beauty, and arise to demonstrate their servitude to His sacred Threshold.”

Abdu’l-Baha, quoted in Advent of Divine Justice

Abdu'l-Baha says that:

Many holy souls in former times longed to witness this century, lamenting night and day, yearning to be upon the earth in this cycle; but... He has bestowed this upon us, even as Christ declared, "Many are called but few are chosen." Verily, God has **chosen you** for His love and knowledge; God has **chosen you** for the worthy service of unifying mankind; God has **chosen you** for the purpose of investigating reality and promulgating international peace; God has **chosen you** for the progress and development of humanity, for spreading and proclaiming true education, for the expression of love toward your fellow creatures and the removal of prejudice; God has **chosen you** to blend together human hearts and give light to the human world...But we must be attentive, alert and mindful, occupied with service to all mankind, appreciating the bestowals of God and ever **conforming to His will.**

Promulgation of Universal Peace, Abdu'l-Baha

Exert yourselves; your mission is unspeakably glorious. Should success crown your enterprise, America will assuredly evolve into a center from which waves of spiritual power will emanate, and the throne of the **Kingdom of God** will, in the plenitude of its majesty and glory, be firmly established.”

Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of the Divine Plan

And again Abdu'l-Baha tells us:

The range of your future achievements still remains undisclosed. I fervently hope that in the near future the whole earth may be stirred and shaken by the results of your achievements. The hope, therefore, which `Abdu'l-Baha cherishes for you is that the same success which has attended your efforts in America may crown your endeavors in other parts of the world, that through you the fame of the Cause of God may be diffused throughout the East and the West and the advent of the **Kingdom of the Lord of Hosts** be proclaimed in all the five continents of the globe.

Tablets of the Divine Plan

The teaching aspect of the Plan must now be pondered. Its challenge must be met, and its requirements studied, weighed, and fulfilled...

All must participate, however humble their origin, however limited their experience, however restricted their means, however deficient their education, however pressing their cares and preoccupations, however unfavorable the environment in which they live.

Shoghi Effendi, Advent of Divine Justice

"Strive earnestly," He again exhorts both races, "and put forth your greatest endeavor toward the accomplishment of this fellowship and the cementing of this bond of brotherhood between you. Such an attainment is not possible without will and effort on the part of each; from one, expressions of gratitude and appreciation; from the other, kindness and recognition of equality. Each one should endeavor to develop and assist the other toward mutual advancement.... Love and unity will be fostered between you, thereby bringing about the oneness of mankind. **For the accomplishment of unity between the colored and white will be an assurance of the world's peace.**" "I hope," He thus addresses members of the white race, "that ye may cause that downtrodden race to become glorious, and to be joined with the white race, to serve the world of man with the utmost sincerity, faithfulness, love, and purity. This opposition, enmity, and prejudice among the white race and the colored cannot be effaced **except through faith, assurance, and the teachings of the Blessed Beauty.**" "This question of the union of the white and the black is very important," He warns, "for if it is not realized, ere long great difficulties will arise, and harmful results will follow." "If this matter remaineth without change," is yet another warning, "enmity will be increased day by day, and the final result will be hardship and may end in bloodshed."

The House of Justice describes the impact of racism:

Racism, one of the most baneful and persistent evils, is a major barrier to peace. Its practice perpetrates too outrageous a violation of the dignity of human beings to be countenanced under any pretext. **Racism retards the unfoldment of the boundless potentialities of its victims, corrupts its perpetrators, and blights human progress.** Recognition of the oneness of mankind, implemented by appropriate legal measures, must be universally upheld if this problem is to be overcome.

The Universal House of Justice, The Promise of World Peace, p. 25

The House of Justice Tells us that:

“...The expressions of racial prejudice have **transmuted into forms that are multifaceted, less blatant and more intricate, and thus more intractable...**”

This “requires that they **adapt their approaches** to the varying circumstances.”

The Universal House of Justice

So in fighting the Double Crusade the Guardian states:

Let anyone who feels the urge among the participators in this crusade, which embraces all the races, all the republics, classes and denominations of the entire Western Hemisphere, arise, and, circumstances permitting, direct in particular the attention, and win eventually the unqualified adherence, of the Negro, the Indian, the Eskimo, and Jewish races to his Faith. No more laudable and meritorious service can be rendered the Cause of God, at the present hour, than a successful effort to **enhance the diversity of the members of the American Bahá'í community by swelling the ranks of the Faith through the enrollment of the members of these races.**

Shoghi Effendi, *Advent of Divine Justice*

The Guardian then says:

Every laborer in those fields, ... should... make it his chief and constant concern ... to **familiarize himself with their ideas, tastes, and habits, to study the approach best suited to them,** to concentrate, patiently and tactfully, on a few who have shown marked capacity and receptivity, and to endeavor, with extreme kindness, to implant such love, zeal, and devotion in their hearts as to **enable them to become in turn self-sufficient and independent promoters of the Faith in their respective localities.**

Advent of Divine Justice

To bring the white and the black together is considered impossible and unfeasible, but the breaths of the Holy Spirit will bring about this union.

...the enmity and hatred which exist between the white and the black races is very dangerous and there is no doubt that it will end in bloodshed unless the **influence of the Word of God, the breaths of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh** are diffused amongst **them** and harmony is established between the two races.

They must destroy the foundation of enmity and rancor and lay the basis of love and affinity. **The power of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh will remove this danger from America.**

`Abdu'l-Bahá, The Power of Unity, p. 31, #26

And the Guardian tells us that:

Both sides have prejudices to overcome; one, the prejudice which is built up in the minds of a people who have conquered and imposed their will, and the other the reactionary prejudice of those who have been conquered and sorely put upon.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *To Move the World*, p. 294

The tests are hard, but tackling them is what it means to be favored.

The tests of every dispensation are in direct proportion with the greatness of the Cause and as heretofore such a manifest Covenant, written by the Supreme Pen, has not been entered upon, the tests are proportionately severe.

`Abdu'l-Bahá, in Star of the West, Vol. X, No. 14

So what is the role of the Favored Pupil of the Eye

The Guardian also tells us:

He does not doubt-though it grieves him to have to admit it-that there are believers who have not overcome their racial prejudices. The Bahá'ís are not perfect, but they have made a great step forward by embracing the Faith of God. We must be patient with each other, and realize that each one of us has some faults to overcome, of one kind or another.

You, he feels need to use greater wisdom and forbearance in dealing with your fellow-Bahá'ís and with difficult situations. To be courageous-as you evidently are-to rebel against the injustices of race prejudice and fight them, is not enough, you must also show some patience for those who suffer from this terrible American ailment of Negro prejudice and act with wisdom in overcoming it, instead of going at it so vehemently that you alienate the Bahá'ís, instead of leading them to greater manifestations of the Bahá'í spirit of brotherhood and racial amity...

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, pp. 409-10, #1122

So what is the role of the Favored Pupil of the Eye

The Guardian feels strongly that the Negro Bahá'ís have **great responsibilities**, both towards their own race and towards their fellow believers. **They must not only arise to teach the Cause to the members of their own race, but must also do all in their power to ensure that within their Bahá'í Community itself the Negro and white believers understand and love each other and are truly one soul in different bodies.** Our allegiance as believers is to Bahá'u'lláh; we must fix our attention and devotion on Him and His will, and heedless of the shortcomings of our fellow Bahá'ís, act as He would have us towards them.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 11/23/41, Microfilm collection of the original letters of Shoghi Effendi, National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, IL.

So what is the role of the Favored Pupil of the Eye

The Guardian Asks:

Is not faith but another word for implicit obedience, whole-hearted allegiance, uncompromising adherence to that which we believe is the revealed and express will of God, **however perplexing it might first appear**, however at variance with the shadowy views, the impotent doctrines, the crude theories, the idle imaginings, the fashionable conceptions of a transient and troublous age?

Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, pp. 62-3

Our Covenant...

We have been promised in our writings that this is “a day that will not be followed by night”. By this is meant that this faith will not splinter. And the reason it will not splinter is that we have a Covenant. So in this dispensation, divine guidance flowed to us from Bahá'u'lláh, then to Abdu'l-Baha, then to the beloved Guardian, and now through the Universal House of Justice.

And regarding the House of Justice, the Bahá'í writings affirm that its decisions are **"the source of all good and freed from all error"**.

So what is the role of the Favored Pupil of the Eye

In the document “Statement of Purpose and Methods of the Ruhi Institute” we find:

The Ruhi Institute...asserts that effective participation which will not easily degenerate into political manipulation requires a systematic learning process within each community and region so that **the community itself experiments with new ideas, new methods, and new technologies and procedures, rather than being the object of the social experimentation of others.** Thus, one of the first steps in establishing participatory development processes in a region is to promote intensive participation by an increasing number of individuals in learning, **in a constant effort to apply knowledge to improve the conditions of community life and to create and strengthen the institutions of a new world order.**

So what is the role of the Favored Pupil of the Eye

...the friends must effectively assess the forces at work in their society and, beginning in the neighborhoods and clusters, contribute their share to the process of learning and systematization which, as their numbers, knowledge, and influence grow, will transform their lives, families and communities. **Only** if the efforts to eradicate the bane of prejudice are coherent with the full range of the community's affairs, **only** if they arise naturally within the systematic pattern of expansion, community building, and involvement with society, will the American believers expand their capacity, year after year and decade after decade, to make their mark on their community and society, and contribute to the high aim set for the Bahá'ís by Abdu'l-Baha to eliminate racial prejudice from the face of the earth.

Universal House of Justice, 10th April 2011

So what is the role of the Favored Pupil of the Eye

Shoghi Effendi tells us:

“The whole race question in America is a national one and of great importance. **But the Negro friends must not waste their precious opportunity to serve the Faith, in these momentous days, by dwelling on the admitted shortcomings of the white friends.** They must arise and serve and teach, confident of the future they are building, a future in which we know these barriers will have once and for all been overcome!...

“May the Beloved of our hearts guide and sustain you in your constant activities, enable you to increase the number of the coloured believers, whose interests are close to my heart, and for whom I continually and ardently beseech the guidance and the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh.”

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 2/9/42