

STRENGTHENING UNITY: Preparing for entry by troops

1) “O My Servant! Obey Me and I shall make thee like unto Myself. I say ‘Be,’ and it is, and thou shalt say ‘Be,’ and it shall be.” ... Bahá’u’lláh, *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys*, p.63.

2) “Why this repeated review of fundamentals? This emphasis, this review, is to sound an appeal for solid thinking, for the attainment of correct perspectives, for the adoption of proper attitudes. And these are impossible without a deep appreciation of Bahá’í fundamentals.” ... The Universal House of Justice, *Individual Rights and Freedoms in the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p.6.

3) “Today the one overriding need is unity and harmony among the beloved of the Lord, for they should have among them but one heart and soul and should, so far as in them lieth, unitedly withstand the hostility of all the peoples of the world; they must bring to an end the benighted prejudices of all nations and religions and must make known to every member of the human race that all are the leaves of one branch, the fruits of one bough.

“Until such time, however, as the friends establish perfect unity among themselves, how can they summon others to harmony and peace?”

That soul which hath itself not come alive
Can it then hope another to revive?

“Reflect ye as to other than human forms of life and be ye admonished thereby: those clouds that drift apart cannot produce the bounty of the rain, and are soon lost; a flock of sheep, once scattered, falleth prey to the wolf, and birds that fly alone will be caught fast in the claws of the hawk. What greater demonstration could there be that unity leadeth to flourishing life, while dissension and withdrawing from the others, will lead only to misery; for these are the sure ways to bitter disappointment and ruin.” ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 277.

4) “Remember how Adam and the others once dwelt together in Eden. No sooner, however, did a quarrel break out between Adam and Satan than they were, one and all, banished from the Garden, and this was meant as a warning to the human race, a means of telling humankind that dissension--even with the Devil--is the way to bitter loss. This is why, in our illumined age, God teacheth that conflicts and disputes are not allowable, not even with Satan himself.” ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 275.

5) “If they paused for one moment to think for what purpose the Báb and the Martyrs gave their lives, and Bahá’u’lláh and the Master accepted so much suffering, they would never let such definitions and accusations cross their lips when speaking of each other. As long as the friends quarrel amongst themselves their efforts will not be blessed for they are disobeying God.” ... written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer) *Living the Life: a Compilation*, p. 10 (British Publishing Trust) also in *Compilation of Compilations* p. 21

6) “Do not quarrel with anybody, and shun every form of dispute. Utter the Word of God. If he accepteth it the desired purpose is attained, and if he turneth away leave him to himself and trust to God. Such is the attribute of those who are firm in the Covenant.”

***‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 210.

7) “A wide latitude for action must be allowed them, which means that a large margin for mistakes must also be allowed. Your National Assembly and the Local Assemblies must not react automatically to every mistake, but distinguish between those that are self-correcting with the passage of time and do no particular harm to the community and those which require Assembly intervention. Related to this is the tendency of the friends to criticize each other at the slightest provocation, whereas the Teachings call upon them to encourage each other. Such tendencies are of course motivated by a deep love for the Faith, a desire to see it free of any flaw. But human beings are not perfect. The Local Assemblies and the friends must be helped through your example and through loving counsel to refrain from such a pattern of criticism, which stunts the growth and development of the community.... The Cause is not so fragile that a degree of mistakes cannot be tolerated.” *** The Universal House of Justice, letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States May 19, 1994

8) “If we Bahá’ís cannot attain to cordial unity among ourselves, then we fail to realize the main purpose for which the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh and the Beloved Master lived and suffered.

“In order to achieve this cordial unity one of the first essentials insisted on by Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is that we resist the natural tendency to let our attention dwell on the faults and failings of others rather than on our own. Each of us is responsible for one life only, and that is our own. Each of us is immeasurably far from being “perfect as our heavenly father is perfect” and the task of perfecting our own life and character is one that requires all our attention, our will-power and energy. If we allow our attention and energy to be taken up in efforts to keep others right and remedy their faults, we are wasting precious time. We are like ploughmen each of whom has his team to manage and his plough to direct, and in order to keep his furrow straight he must keep his eye on his goal and concentrate on his own task. If he looks to this side and that to see how Tom and Harry are getting on and to criticize their ploughing, then his own furrow will assuredly become crooked.

“On no subject are the Bahá’í teachings more emphatic than on the necessity to abstain from faultfinding and backbiting while being ever eager to discover and root out our own faults and overcome our own failings.

“If we profess loyalty to Bahá’u’lláh, to our Beloved Master and our dear Guardian, then we must show our love by obedience to these explicit teachings. Deeds not words are what they demand, and no amount of fervour in the use of expressions of loyalty and adulation will compensate for failure to live in the spirit of the teachings.” *** From a letter dated 12 May 1925 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer) *Living the Life: a Compilation*, p. 10 (British Publishing Trust) also in *Compilation of Compilations vol. II* p. 34

9) “...the most hateful characteristic of man is fault-finding.” ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 91

10) “O beloved of the Lord! If any soul speak ill of an absent one, the only result will clearly be this: he will dampen the zeal of the friends and tend to make them indifferent. For backbiting is divisive, it is the leading cause among the friends of a disposition to withdraw. If any individual should speak ill of one who is absent, it is incumbent on his hearers, in a spiritual and friendly manner, to stop him, and say in effect: would this detraction serve any useful purpose? Would it please the Blessed Beauty, contribute to the lasting honour of the friends, promote the holy Faith, support the Covenant, or be of any possible benefit to any soul? No, Never! On the contrary, it would make the dust to settle so thickly on the heart that the ears would hear no more, and the eyes would no longer behold the light of truth.

If, however, a person setteth about speaking well of another, opening his lips to praise another, he will touch an answering chord in his hearers and they will be stirred up by the breathings of God...” ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p.230-231.

11) “...the Cause of the Ancient Beauty is the very essence of love,...existing only that all may...

- become servants one to another,
- adore one another,
- bless one another,
- praise one another;
- that each one may loose his tongue and extol the rest without exception,
- each one voice his gratitude to all the rest;
- that all should lift up their eyes to the horizon of glory, and remember that they are linked to the Holy Threshold;
- that they should see nothing but good in one another,
- hear nothing but praise of one another,
- and speak no word of one another save only to praise.”

... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 229-230. [emphasis added]

12) “One must see in every human being only that which is worthy of praise. When this is done, one can be a friend to the whole human race. If, however, we look at people from the standpoint of their faults, then being a friend to them is a formidable task.” ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 169

13) “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*, p. 280.