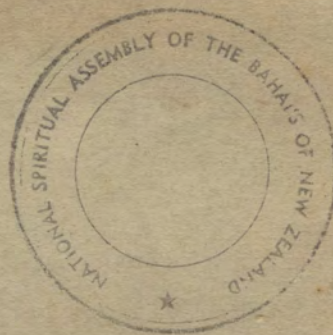


M. B. Stevenson

BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS ON ECONOMICS



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BAHA'I TEACHINGS ON ECONOMICS

A Compilation

The disease which afflicts the body politic is lack of love, and absence of altruism. In the hearts of men no real love is found, and the condition is such that unless their susceptibilities are quickened by some power so that unity, love and accord develop within them, there can be no healing, no relief among mankind. Love and unity are the needs of the body politic today. Without these no progress and prosperity can be attained. Therefore the friends of God must adhere to that Power which will create this love and unity in the hearts of the sons of men. Science cannot cure the illness of the body politic. Science cannot create amity and fellowship in human hearts. Neither can patriotism or racial prejudice effect a remedy. It can be accomplished solely through the Divine bounties and the spiritual bestowals which have descended from God in this Day for that very purpose.

This is an exigency of the times, and the Divine remedy has been provided. The spiritual teachings of the religion of God alone can create this love, unity and accord in human hearts. Therefore, hold to these heavenly agencies which God has provided so that through the Love of God this soul-tie may be established, this heart-attachment realized, the light of the reality of unity be reflected from you throughout the Universe.

The secrets of the whole economic question are divine in nature, and are concerned with the world of the heart and spirit. In the Baha'i teachings this is most completely explained, and without the consideration of the Baha'i teachings it is impossible to bring about a better state.

Baha'i Scriptures, p. 812

SPIRIT OF ECONOMIC WELFARE

Among the principles or teachings of Baha'u'llah is the readjustment and equalization of the economic standards of mankind. This deals with the question of human livelihood. It is evident that under present systems and conditions of Government the poor are subject to the greatest need and distress, while others more fortunate live in luxury and plenty far beyond their actual necessities. This inequality of portion and privilege is one of the deep and vital problems of human society. That there is need of an equalization and apportionment by which all may possess the comforts and privileges of life is evident. The remedy must be legislative readjustment of conditions. The rich too must be merciful to the poor, contributing from willing hearts to their needs without being forced or compelled to do so. The composure of the world will be assured by the establishment of this principle in the religious life of mankind.

Among the results of the manifestation of spiritual forces will be that the human world will adapt itself to a new social form. The Justice of God will become manifest throughout human affairs and human equality will be universally established. The poor will receive a great bestowal and the rich attain eternal happiness. For although at the present time the rich enjoy the greatest luxury and comfort, they are nevertheless deprived of eternal happiness; for eternal happiness is contingent upon giving and the poor are everywhere in the state of abject need. Through the manifestation of God's great equity the poor of the world will be rewarded and assisted fully and there will be a readjustment in the economic conditions of mankind so that in the future there will not be the abnormally rich, nor the abject poor. The rich will enjoy the privilege of this new economic condition as well as the poor, for owing to certain provision and restriction they will not be able to accumulate so much as to be burdened by its management, while the poor will be relieved from the stress of want and misery. The rich will enjoy his palace and the poor will have his comfortable cottage.

The essence of the matter is that divine justice will become manifest in human conditions and affairs and all mankind will find comfort and enjoyment in life. It is not meant that all will be equal, for inequality in degree and capacity is a property of nature. Necessarily there will be rich people and also those who will be in want of their livelihood, but in the aggregate community there will be equalization and readjustment of values and interests. In the future there will be no very rich nor extremely poor. There will be an equilibrium of interests, and a condition will be established which will make both rich and poor comfortable and content. This will be an eternal and blessed outcome of the glorious twentieth century which will be realized universally. The significance of it is that the Glad-Tidings of great joy revealed in the promises of the Holy Books will fulfilled.

Promulgation of Universal Peace

EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION

The solution of the economic questions will not be brought about by array of capital against labor, and labor against capital, in strife and conflict, but by the voluntary attitude of goodwill on both sides. Then a real and lasting justness of conditions will be secured.....

It will not be possible in the future for men to amass great fortunes by the labors of others. The rich will willingly divide. They will come to this gradually, naturally, by their own volition. It will never be accomplished by war and bloodshed. Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 170-171

It is impossible for a country to live easily without laws. To solve this problem strong laws must be made, so that all the Governments of the world may be protectors thereof. Baha'i Scriptures, Sec. 670

The Baha'i Cause covers all economic and social questions under the heading and ruling of its laws. The essence of the Baha'i spirit is that in order to establish a better social 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 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. Pronulcation of Universal Peace, p. 233

Then rules and laws should be established to regulate the excessive fortunes of certain private individuals, and limit the misery of millions of the poor masses; thus a certain moderation would be obtained.

Some Answered Questions, p. 313

It would be well, with regard to the social rights of manufacturers, workmen and artisans, that laws be established, giving moderate profits to manufacturers, and to workmen the necessary means of existence and security for the future. Some Answered Questions, p. 313

There must be special laws made, dealing with these extremes of riches and want. The members of the Government should consider the laws of God when they are framing plans for the ruling of the people. The general rights of mankind must be guarded and preserved.

The government of the countries should conform to the Divine law which gives equal justice to all. This is the only way in which the deplorable superfluity of great wealth and miserable, demoralizing, degrading poverty can be abolished. Not until this is done will the law of God be obeyed.

Wisdom of 'Abdul-Baha, p. 140

SOCIALIZATION

Another teaching suggests a plan whereby all the individual members may enjoy the utmost comfort and welfare. The degrees of society must be preserved. The farmer will continue to till the soil, the artist pursue his art, the banker to finance the nation. An army has need of its general, captain, and private soldiers. The degrees varying with the pursuits are essential. But in this Baha'i plan there is no class hatred. Each is to be protected and each individual member of the body politic is to live in the greatest comfort and hap-

piness. Work is to be provided for all, and there will be no needy ones to be seen in the streets. Baha'i Magazine, Vol. 4, p. 101

Such utter indifference in the human family is due to lack of control, to lack of a working law, to lack of kindness in its midst.

Baha'i Magazine, Vol. 13, p. 227

The remedy, however, cannot consist in the bringing to pass of equality, absolute equality among men; this would be impossible. There is needed some organization which will bring about an order in this disorder.
.....There must be degrees in the organization.....

Some are too rich, some are too poor, some have millions and some have nothing. An organization is necessary to control this state of affairs.....

Baha'i Magazine, Vol. 3, p. 5

Certainly some being enormously rich and others lamentably poor, an organization is necessary to control and improve this state of affairs.

Wisdom of 'Abdul-Baha, p. 140

Consider an individual who has amassed treasures by colonizing a country for his profit; he has obtained incomparable fortune, and has secured profits and incomes which flow like a river, whilst a hundred thousand unfortunate people, weak and powerless, are in need of a mouthful of bread. There is neither equality nor brotherhood. So you see that general peace and joy are destroyed, the welfare of humanity is partially annihilated, and that collective life is fruitless. Some Answered Questions, p. 313

The question of socialization is very difficult. It will not be solved by strikes for wages. All the Governments of the world must be united, and organize an assembly, the members of which shall be elected from the Parliaments and the noble ones of the nations. These must plan with wisdom and power, so that neither the capitalists suffer enormous losses, nor the laborers become needy. In the utmost moderation they should make the law, then announce to the public that the rights of the working people are to be effectively preserved; also the rights of the capitalists are to be protected.

Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 171

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES:

The solution begins with the village, and when the village is reconstructed, then the cities will be also. The idea is this: there in each village will be erected a storehouse. In the language of Religion it is called the House of Finance. That is a universal storehouse, which is commenced in the village. Its administration is through a Committee of the wise ones of the community, and with the approval of that committee all the affairs are directed.

Light of the World, p. 45

From among the wise men of every village a Board should be organized and affairs of that village should be under the control of the Board. Likewise, a general storehouse should be founded and a Secretary appointed for it.

Baha'i Scriptures, Sec. 831

To solve this problem we must begin with the farmer; there we will lay a foundation for system and order because the peasant class and the agricultural class exceed other classes in the importance of their service. In every village there must be established a general storehouse which will have a number of revenues.

(Note:- The "Storehouse" and the "House of Finance" are designations for the same Institution..)

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF BAHAI ECONOMIC PROGRAM

A- MINIMUM LIVELIHOOD

We will consider a farmer; one of the peasants. We will look into his income. We will find out, for instance, what is his annual revenue and also what are his expenditures. Now, if his income be equal to his expenditures, from such a farmer nothing whatever will be taken. That is, he will not be subjected to taxation of any sort, needing as he does all his income.

.....Then there must be considered such emergencies as follows: a certain farmer whose expenses run up to ten thousand dollars and whose income is only five thousand. He will receive necessary expenses from this storehouse. Five thousand dollars will be allotted to him so he will not be in need.

Baha'i Magazine, Vol. 13, p. 227

B- PROFIT SHARING IN INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES

Laws and regulations should be established which would permit the workmen to receive from the factory owner their wages and a share in the fourth or fifth part of the profits, according to the wants of the factory; or in some other way the body of the workmen and the manufacturers should share equitably the profits and advantages. Indeed, the direction and administration of affairs come from the owner of the factory, and the work and labor, from the body of the workmen. Some Answered Questions, p. 313

According to the Divine law, employees should not be paid merely by wages. Nay, rather, they should be partners in every work.

Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 171

The owners of properties, mines and factories, should share their incomes with their employees, and give a fairly certain percentage of their profits to their working men, in order that the employees should receive, besides their wages, some of the general income of the factory, so that each employee may strive with his soul in the work. Baha'i Magazine, Vol. 8, p. 7

Every factory that has ten thousand shares, will give two thousand shares of these ten thousand to its employees, and will write them in their names so that they may have them, and the rest will belong to the capitalists. Then at the end of the month, or year, whatever they may earn, after the expenses and wages are paid, according to the number of shares, should be divided among both.

Baha'i Scriptures, Sec. 669

C- GRADUATED INCOME TAX ON EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENSE:

A man's capacity for production and his needs will be equalized and reconciled through taxation. If his production exceeds he will pay a tax; if

his necessities exceed his production, he shall receive an amount sufficient to equalize or adjust. Therefore taxation will be proportionate to capacity and production and there will be no poor in the community.

Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 212

For example, a rich person has a large income and a poor person a small income. To put it in a more explicit way: A rich person has ten thousand kilos of products, and a poor person has ten kilos. Now is it fair to tax them equally? Nay, rather the poor person in this case must be exempt from taxes. If the poor person gives one-tenth of his income and the rich person one-tenth of his income, it will be unjust. Thus in this way a law should be made that the poor person who has only ten kilos and needs them all for his necessary food, be exempt from paying taxes. But if the rich person, who has ten thousand kilos pays one-tenth or two-tenths taxes on his products, it will not be a hardship to him. For example, if he gives two thousand kilos, he will still have eight thousand kilos. If he has fifty thousand kilos, even though he gives ten thousand he will still have forty thousand kilos. Therefore, laws must be made in this way. Baha'i Scriptures, Sec. 667

The farmers whose incomes are sufficient only for their food and expenses must be free from paying taxes. All products and incomes gathered and collected must be put in the general store. If there is a helpless one in that village his daily needs must be given to him. On the other hand a rich person who needs only fifty kilos of products and still has five hundred thousand kilos, after all his expenses are paid, should be taxed two-tenths and at the end of the year, whatever remains in the store should be distributed for general expense.

Baha'i Scriptures, Sec. 668

D- DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AT TIME OF DEATH

Inasmuch as the matter of death among mankind is an unavoidable event, if the distribution of the estate left by those who ascend to God should be effected according to this divine recommendation, it will be impossible for wealth to be accumulated by the few or for any particular family to exercise a monopoly, leaving others deprived and afflicted by poverty and want. For the Mighty Law-giver has dealt with this important affair in this manner: He has divided the heirs of the deceased into seven classes, including teachers, who are the spiritual fathers of enlightened individuals in the world of humanity. The heritage is divided according to the number 2520, which is the lowest number comprising the integral fractions of nine. Under this division the seven classes eligible to legacies are as follows:

1. Offspring
2. Wives
3. Fathers
4. Mothers
5. Brothers
6. Sisters
7. Teachers

The nearest relatives are arranged the closest. Each class receives its due according to the number sixty which runs down through all. He has decreed that these seven classes mentioned will come equally into possession of their legitimate rights, each receiving his share from this division. When the people of insight reflect upon that which has been recorded they will see that

with this command in operation wealth will never be monopolized by a limited few and no individual through sheer forceful skill will come into possession of another's wealth. Mirza Abul-Fazl - The Brilliant Proof, p. 35-36

The purpose of Baha'u'llah's arrangement is that a man is not to be interfered with in the leaving of his property. Man may divide his wealth as he likes. Everyone has to write a will and affix a seal thereto and no one need know about the arrangement he has made. After his death the will is opened and read and whatever he has decreed will be enforced. Man should have perfect freedom to decide as he wishes in making his will. Man has a perfect right to do with his property as he sees fit and his wishes should be carried out.

In case a person dies and leaves no will, then the method of Baha'u'llah will be enforced. But man can bequeath all his property to one person. He is perfectly free to do as he wishes with his own property for he has been the one to acquire it. Light of the World, p. 129

In accordance with Baha'u'llah's teachings, a Baha'i can give all his property to his eldest son. He may do just as he likes. As long as it is his own property he may do as he wishes. One's property cannot be snatched by another. There is one difference, however; when a Baha'i leaves all to his eldest son, the eldest son in turn may break the line and divide as he wants to - according to Baha'u'llah's method, or as he wishes. Light of the World, p. 129

E- WORK IS WORSHIP

It is incumbent upon every one of you to engage in some one occupation, such as arts, trades and the like. We have made this - your occupation - identical with the worship of God, the True One. Reflect, O people, upon the mercy of God and upon His Favors, then thank Him at dawn and at dusk. (Twelfth Glad Tidings) Baha'u'llah Tablet of Glad Tidings

Waste not your time in idleness and indolence, and occupy yourselves with that which will profit yourselves and others besides yourselves. Thus hath the matter been decreed in this Tablet from the Horizon of which the Sun of Wisdom and Divine Utterance is gleaming. The Most despised of men before God is he who sits and begs. Cling unto the rope of means, relying upon God, the Causer of Causes. Every soul who occupies himself in an art or trade - this will be accounted an act of worship before God.

F- VOLUNTARY GIVING - CARE OF THE POOR

Good God! Is it possible that, seeing one of his fellow creatures starving, destitute of everything, a man can rest and live comfortably in his luxurious mansion? He who meets another in the greatest misery, can he enjoy his fortune? That is why, in the Religion of God, it is prescribed and established that wealthy men each year give over a certain portion of their fortune for the maintenance of the poor and unfortunate. That is the foundation of the religion of God and the most essential of the commandments.

As now man is not forced nor obliged by the Government, if by the natural tendency of his good heart, with the greatest spirituality, he goes to this expense for the poor, this will be a thing very much praised, approved and pleasing.

Such is the meaning of the Good Works in the Divine Books and Tablets.
Some Answered Questions, p. 313

And among the teachings of Baha'u'llah is voluntary sharing of one's property with others among mankind. This voluntary sharing is greater than equality, and consists in this: That man should not prefer himself to others, but rather should sacrifice his life and property for others. But this should not be introduced by coercion so that it becomes a law and man is compelled to follow it. Nay, rather, man should voluntarily and of his own choice sacrifice his property and life for others, and spend willingly for the poor, just as is done in Persia among the Baha'is. Baha'i Scriptures, Sec. 754

O ye rich ones on earth: The poor in your midst are My trust; Guard ye My Trust, and be not intent only on your own ease. Hidden Words

THE BAHAI PROGRAM

It seems as though all creatures can exist singly and alone. For example, a tree can exist solitary and alone on a given prairie or in a valley or on a mountainside. An animal upon a mountain or a bird soaring in the air might live a solitary life. They are not in need of cooperation or solidarity. Such animated beings enjoy the greatest comfort and happiness in their respective solitary lives.

On the contrary, man cannot live singly and alone. He is in need of continuous cooperation and mutual help. For example, a man living alone in the wilderness will eventually starve. He can never, singly and alone, provide himself with all the necessities of existence. Therefore, he is in need of cooperation and reciprocity.

The mystery of this phenomenon, the cause thereof is this, that mankind has been created from one single origin, has branched off from one family. Thus in reality all mankind represents one family. God has not created any difference. He has created all as one that thus this family might live in perfect happiness and well-being.

Regarding reciprocity and cooperation; each member of the body politic should live in the utmost comfort and welfare because each individual member of humanity is a member of the body politic and if one member of the members be in distress or be afflicted with some disease all the other members must necessarily suffer. For example, a member of the human organism is the eye. If the eye should be affected that affliction would affect the whole nervous system. Hence, if a member of the body politic becomes afflicted, in reality, from the standpoint of sympathetic connection, all will share that affliction since this (one afflicted) is a member of the group of members, a part of the whole. Is it possible for one member or part to be in distress and the other members be at ease? It is impossible! Hence God has desired that in the body politic of humanity each one shall enjoy perfect welfare and comfort.

Although the body politic is one family yet because of lack of harmonious relations some members are comfortable and some in direct misery, some members are satisfied and some are hungry, some members are clothed in most costly garments and some families are in need of food and shelter. Why? Because this

family lacks the necessary reciprocity and symmetry. This household is not well arranged. This household is not living under a perfect law. All the laws which are legislated do not ensure happiness. They do not provide comfort. Therefore a law must be given to this family by means of which all the members of this family will enjoy equal well-being and happiness. Is it possible for one member of a family to be subjected to the utmost misery and to abject poverty and for the rest of the family to be comfortable? It is impossible unless those members of the family be senseless, atrophied, inhospitable, unkind. Then they would say, 'though these members do belong to our family - let them alone. Let us look after ourselves. Let them die. So long as I am comfortable, I am honored, I am happy - this is my brother - let him die. If he be in misery let him remain in misery, so long as I am comfortable. If he is without clothes, so long as I am clothed, let him remain as he is. If he is shelterless, homeless, so long as I have a home, let him remain in the wilderness.'

Such utter indifference in the human family is due to lack of control, to lack of a working law, to lack of kindness in its midst. If kindness had been shown to the members of the family surely all the members thereof would have enjoyed comfort and happiness.

His Holiness Baha'u'llah has given instructions regarding every one of the questions confronting humanity. He has given teachings and instructions with regard to every one of the problems with which man struggles. Among them are (the teachings) concerning the question of economics that all the members of the body politic may enjoy through the working out of this solution the greatest happiness, welfare and comfort without any harm or injury attacking the general order of things. Thereby no difference or dissension will occur. No sedition or contention will take place. The solution is this:

First and foremost is the principle that to all the members of the body politic shall be given the greatest achievements of the world of humanity. Each one shall have the utmost welfare and well-being. To solve this problem we must begin with the farmer; there we will lay a foundation for system and order because the peasant class and the agricultural class exceed other classes in the importance of their service. In every village there must be established a general storehouse which will have a number of revenues.

The first revenue shall be that of the tenths or tithes.

The second revenue (will be derived) from the animals.

The third revenue from the minerals, that is to say, every mine prospected or discovered, a third thereof will go to this vast storehouse.

The fourth is this: whosoever dies without leaving any heirs all his heritage will go to the general storehouse.

Fifth, if any treasures shall be found on the land they shall be devoted to the storehouse.

All these revenues will be assembled in this storehouse.

As to the first, the tenths or tithes: we will consider a farmer, one

of the peasants. We will look into his income. We will find out, for instance, what is his annual revenue and also what are his expenditures. Now, if his income be equal to his expenditures, from such a farmer nothing whatever will be taken. That is, he will not be subjected to taxation of any sort, needing as he does all his income. Another farmer may have expenses running up to one thousand dollars we will say, and his income is two thousand dollars. From such a one a tenth will be required, because he has a surplus. But if his income be ten thousand dollars and his expenses one thousand dollars or his income twenty thousand dollars, he will have to pay taxes, one fourth. If his income be one hundred thousand dollars and his expenses five thousand, one third will he have to pay because he has still a surplus since his expenses are five thousand and his income one hundred thousand. If he pays, say thirty five thousand dollars, in addition to the expenditure of five thousand he still has sixty thousand left. But if his expenses be ten thousand and his income two hundred thousand, then he must give an even half because ninety thousand will be in that case the sum remaining. Such a scale as this will determine allotment of taxes. All the income from such revenues will go to the general storehouse.

Then there must be considered such emergencies as follows: A certain farmer whose expenses run up to ten thousand dollars and whose income is only five thousand, he will receive necessary expenses from this storehouse. Five thousand dollars will be allotted to him so he will not be in need.

Then the orphans will be looked after all of those expenses will be taken care of. The cripples in the village - all their expenses will be looked after. The poor in the village - their necessary expenses will be defrayed. And other members who for valid reasons are incapacitated - the blind, the old, the deaf - their comfort must be looked after. In the village no one will remain in need or in want. All will live in the utmost comfort and welfare. Yet no schism will assail the general order of the body politic.

Hence the expenses or expenditures of the general storehouse are now made clear and its activities made manifest. The income of this general storehouse has been shown. Certain trustees will be elected by the people in a given village to look after these transactions. The farmers will be taken care of and if after all these expenses are defrayed any surplus is found in the storehouse it must be transferred to the National Treasury.

This system is all thus ordered so that in the village the very poor will be comfortable, the orphans will live happily and well; in a word, no one will be left destitute. All the individual members of the body politic will thus live comfortably and well.

For larger cities, naturally, there will be a system on a larger scale. Were I to go into that solution the details thereof would be lengthy.

The result of this (system) will be that each individual member of the body politic will live most comfortably and happily under obligation to no one. Nevertheless, there will be preservation of degrees because in the world of humanity there must needs be degrees. The body politic may well be likened to an army. In this army there must be a general, there must be a sergeant, there must be a marshall, there must be the infantry; but all must enjoy the greatest comfort and welfare.

God is not partial and is no respecter of persons. He has made provision for all. The harvest comes forth for everyone. The rain showers upon everybody and the heat of the sun is destined to warm everyone. Therefore there should be for all humanity the utmost happiness, the utmost comfort, the utmost well-being.

But if conditions are such that some are happy and comfortable and some in misery; some are accumulating exorbitant wealth and others are in dire want - under such a system it is impossible for man to be happy and impossible for him to win the good pleasure of God. God is kind to all. The good pleasure of God consists in the welfare of all the individual members of mankind.

A Persian king was one night in his palace, living in the greatest luxury and comfort. Through excessive joy and gladness he addressed a certain man, saying: 'Of all my life this is the happiest moment. Praise be to God, from every point prosperity appears and fortune smiles! My treasury is full and the army is well taken care of. My palaces are many; my land unlimited; my family is well off; my honor and sovereignty are great. What more could I want?'

The poor man at the gate of his palace spoke out, saying: 'O kind king! Assuming that you are from every point of view so happy, free from every worry and sadness - do you not worry for us? You say that on your own account you have no worries - but do you never worry about the poor in your land? Is it becoming or meet that you should be so well off and we are in such dire want and need? In view of our needs and troubles how can you rest in your palace, how can you even say that you are free from worries and sorrows? As a ruler you must be so egoistic as to think of yourself alone but you must think of those who are your subjects. When we are comfortable then you will be comfortable; when we are in misery, how can you, as a king, be in happiness?'

The purport is this; that we are all inhabiting one globe of earth. In reality we are one family and each one of us is a member of this family. We must all be in the greatest happiness and comfort under a just rule and regulation which is according to the good pleasure of God, thus causing us to be happy, for this life is fleeting.

If man were to care for himself only he would be nothing but an animal for only the animals are thus egoistic. If you bring a thousand sheep to a well to kill nine hundred and ninety-nine the one remaining sheep would go on grazing, not thinking of the others and worrying not at all about the lost, never bothering that its own kind had passed away, or had perished or been killed. To look after one's self only is therefore an animal propensity. It is the animal propensity to live solitary and alone. It is the animal proclivity to look after one's own comfort. But man was created to be a man - to be fair, to be just, to be merciful, to be kind to all his species, never to be willing that he himself be well off while others are in misery and distress - this is an attribute of the animal and not of man. Nay, rather, man should be willing to accept hardships for himself in order that others may enjoy wealth; he should enjoy trouble for himself that others may enjoy happiness and well-being. This is the attribute of men. This is becoming of man. Otherwise man is not man - he is less than the animal.

The man who thinks only of himself and is thoughtless of others is

undoubtedly inferior to the animal because the animal is not possessed of the reasoning faculty. The animal is excused; but in man there is reason, the faculty of justice, the faculty of mercifulness. Possessing all these faculties he must not leave them unused. He who is so hard-hearted as to think only of his own comfort, such an one will not be called a man.

Man is he who forgets his own interests for the sake of others. His own comfort he forfeits for the well-being of all. Nay, rather, his own life he must be willing to forfeit for the life of mankind. Such a man is the honor of the world of humanity. Such a man is the glory of the world of mankind. Such a man is the one who earns eternal bliss. Such a man is near to the threshold of God. Such a man is the very manifestation of eternal happiness. Otherwise, men are like animals, exhibiting the same proclivities and propensities as the world of animals. What distinction is there? What prerogatives; what perfections? None whatever! Animals are better even - thinking only of themselves and negligent of the needs of others.

Consider how the greatest men in the world - whether among prophets or philosophers - all have forfeited their own comfort, have sacrificed their own pleasure for the well-being of humanity. They have sacrificed their own lives for the body politic. They have sacrificed their own wealth for that of the general welfare. They have forfeited their own honor for the honor of mankind. Therefore it becomes evident that this is the highest attainment for the world of humanity.

We ask God to endow human souls with justice so that they may be fair, and may strive to provide for the comfort of all, that each member of humanity may pass his life in the utmost comfort and welfare. Then this material world will become the very paradise of the Kingdom, this elemental earth will be in a heavenly state and all the servants of God will live in the utmost joy, happiness and gladness. We must all strive and concentrate all our thoughts in order that such happiness may accrue to the world of humanity.

Baha'i Magazine, Vol. 13, p. 227 & 231

In the Bolshevistic principles equality is effected through force. The masses who are opposed to the people of rank and to the wealthy class desire to partake of their advantages.

But in the Divine Teachings equality is brought about through a ready willingness to share. It is commanded as regards wealth that the rich among the people, and the aristocrats should, by their own free will and for the sake of their happiness, concern themselves with the care of the poor. This equality is the result of the lofty characteristics and noble attributes of mankind.

Tablet to Olly Schwarz, Stuttgart, Germany,
dated Mount Carmel, February, 1920.

ECONOMY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

1. KNOW THYSELF

Man should know his own self, and know those things which lead to loftiness or to baseness, to shame or to honor, to affluence or to poverty.

After man has realized his own being and become mature, then for him wealth (or competence) is needed. If this wealth is acquired through a craft and profession it is approvable and worthy of praise to men of wisdom; especially to those servants who arise to train the world and beautify the souls of nations.

Tablet of Tarazat

2 ENGAGE IN CRAFTS AND PROFESSIONS

O My Servants:

Ye are the trees of My Garden; Ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that Ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent on every one to engage in crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of wealth. O men of understanding! For results depend upon means, and the Grace of God shall be all-sufficient unto you. Trees that yield no fruit have been and will ever be for the fire. Hidden Words

O My Servant:

The best of men are they that earn a livelihood by their calling and spend upon themselves and upon their kindred for the Love of God, the Lord of all Worlds. Hidden Words

3 SPIRIT OF WORK

In the Baha'i Cause, arts, sciences, and all crafts are (counted as) worship. The man who makes a piece of notepaper to the best of his ability, conscientiously concentrating all his forces on perfecting it, is giving Praise to God. Briefly, all effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship, if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity. This is worship, to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people. A physician ministering to the sick, gently, tenderly, free from prejudice and believing in the solidarity of the human race, he is giving Praise. Wisdom of 'Abdul-Baha, p. 164

4 ATTITUDE TOWARD WEALTH

O Son of my Handmaid:

Be not troubled in poverty nor confident in riches, for poverty is followed by riches, and riches are followed by poverty. Yet to be poor in all save God is a wondrous gift; Belittle not the value thereof, for in the end it will make thee rich in God, and thus thou shalt know the meaning of the Utterance, "In truth Ye are the poor"; and the Holy Words, "God is the all-possessing", shall even as the true morn break forth gloriously resplendent upon the Horizon of the Lover's heart, and abide secure on the throne of wealth. Hidden Words

5 SEVERANCE

O Son of Man:

Thou dost wish for gold and I desire thy freedom from it. Thou thinkest thyself rich in its possession, and I recognize thy wealth in thy sanctity therefrom. By My Life! This is My Knowledge, and that is thy fancy; how can My Way accord with thine? Hidden Words

It must not be implied that one should give up avocation and attainment of livelihood. Nay, on the contrary, in the Cause of Baha'u'llah monasticism and

asceticism are not sanctioned. In this great cause the Light of Guidance is shining and radiant. His Holiness Baha'u'llah has even said that your occupation and labor is devotion. All humanity must obtain a livelihood; each one at the same time seeking to lift the burden of the other, striving to be the source of comfort to souls, and facilitating the means of living. And this in itself is devotion to God. Baha'u'llah has in this way encouraged and stimulated action, service. But the energies of the heart must not be attached to these things; the soul must not be completely occupied with them. Though the mind be busy the heart must be attracted toward the Kingdom of God, in order that the virtues of humanity shall be attained from every direction and source.

Baha'i Magazine, Vol. 4, p. 101

6 CARE OF THE POOR

O Son of Man!

Bestow My wealth upon My poor, that in heaven thou mayest draw from stores of unfading splendour and treasures of imperishable glory. But by My Life! To offer up thy soul is a more glorious thing, couldst thou but see with Mine Eye.

Hidden Words

O Children of Dust:

Tell the rich of the midnight sighing of the poor, lest heedlessness lead them into the path of destruction, and deprive them of the Tree of Wealth. To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.

Hidden Words

7 TRUE WEALTH

Man in the world of existence has traversed certain degrees until he has arrived at the world of manhood. In every degree he has attained the capacity for advancement to the next degree...In this world also he must prepare himself and get ready for the life hereafter. That of which he is in need in the world of the Kingdom he must obtain here. Just as he prepared himself by acquiring the forces necessary in this world in the world of the womb, so likewise it is necessary that all needful in the Kingdom, all the forces of the Kingdom, must be acquired in this world.

What is he in need of in the Kingdom after he is transferred from this world to the other world? That world is a world of sanctity, therefore it is necessary that he acquire sanctity in this world. In that world there is need of radiance, therefore radiance must be acquired in this world. In that world there is need of spirituality. In this world he must acquire spirituality. In that world faith and assurance, the knowledge of God, the love of God, are needed. These he must acquire in this world so that after he ascends from this mortal to that immortal world he shall find all that is needful in that world eternal ready for him...

By what means can he acquire these things? How is he to obtain these merciful powers?

First, through the knowledge of God. Second, through the love of God. Third, through faith. Fourth, through philanthropic deeds. Fifth, through self-

sacrifice. Sixth, through severance from this world. Seventh, through sanctity and holiness...

Praise be to God! The door of the knowledge of God has been opened by Baha'u'llah. For He has laid the foundation whereby man may become acquainted with the verities of heaven and earth...He is our teacher.

Baha'i Scriptures, Sec. 645-649

