



Service

Walking a Path of Service

Issues for Discourse with Youth

Bahá'í Discourse - Service

Service

If our purpose in this life is to refine our character and to contribute to advancing civilisation, this can best be accomplished by being of service to others. We turn away from selfish desires and perform acts of humble service. We have guidance on this in the Bahá'í Writings and the perfect example in 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

‘Abdu’l means servant. Abbas Effendi, eldest son of Bahá’u’lláh who led the Bahá’í Faith after his father’s passing, took the title ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, meaning servant of Bahá to describe his station of service to the Blessed Beauty.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

the perfect
example
of service



'Abdu'l-Bahá

As to my station, it is that of the servant of Bahá; 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the visible expression of servitude to the Threshold of the Abhá Beauty.

(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 55)

'Abdu'l-Bahá

My name is 'Abdu'l-Bahá, my identity is 'Abdu'l-Bahá, my qualification is 'Abdu'l-Bahá, my reality is 'Abdu'l-Bahá, my praise is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Thralldom to the Blessed Perfection is my glorious and refulgent diadem; and servitude to all the human race is my perpetual religion.

(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 430)

'Abdu'l-Bahá

No name, no title, no mention, no commendation hath he nor will ever have except 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This is my longing. This is my supreme apex. This is my greatest yearning. This is my eternal life. This is my everlasting glory!

(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 430)

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Thy day of service is now come.... Arise for the triumph of My Cause, and, through the power of thine utterance, subdue the hearts of men. Thou must show forth that which will ensure the peace and the well-being of the miserable and the down-trodden.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 92)

Service

It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action....

That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith: Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth.

Service

It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 250)

Service

Wert thou to consider this world, and realize how fleeting are the things that pertain unto it, thou wouldst choose to tread no path except the path of service to the Cause of thy Lord. None would have the power to deter thee from celebrating His praise, though all men should arise to oppose thee. Go thou straight on and persevere in His service.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 314)

Service

They that have forsaken their country for the purpose of teaching Our Cause - these shall the Faithful Spirit strengthen through its power. A company of Our chosen angels shall go forth with them, as bidden by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise. How great the blessedness that awaiteth him that hath attained the honor of serving the Almighty! By My life! No act, however great, can compare with it, except such deeds as have been ordained by God, the All-Powerful, the Most Mighty. Such a service is, indeed, the prince of all goodly deeds, and the ornament of every goodly act.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CLVII, p. 334)

Service

Whoso ariseth to teach Our Cause must needs detach himself from all earthly things, and regard, at all times, the triumph of Our Faith as his supreme objective.... And when he determineth to leave his home, for the sake of the Cause of his Lord, let him put his whole trust in God, as the best provision for his journey, and array himself with the robe of virtue.... If he be kindled with the fire of His love, if he forgoeth all created things, the words he uttereth shall set on fire them that hear him.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CLVII, p. 334)

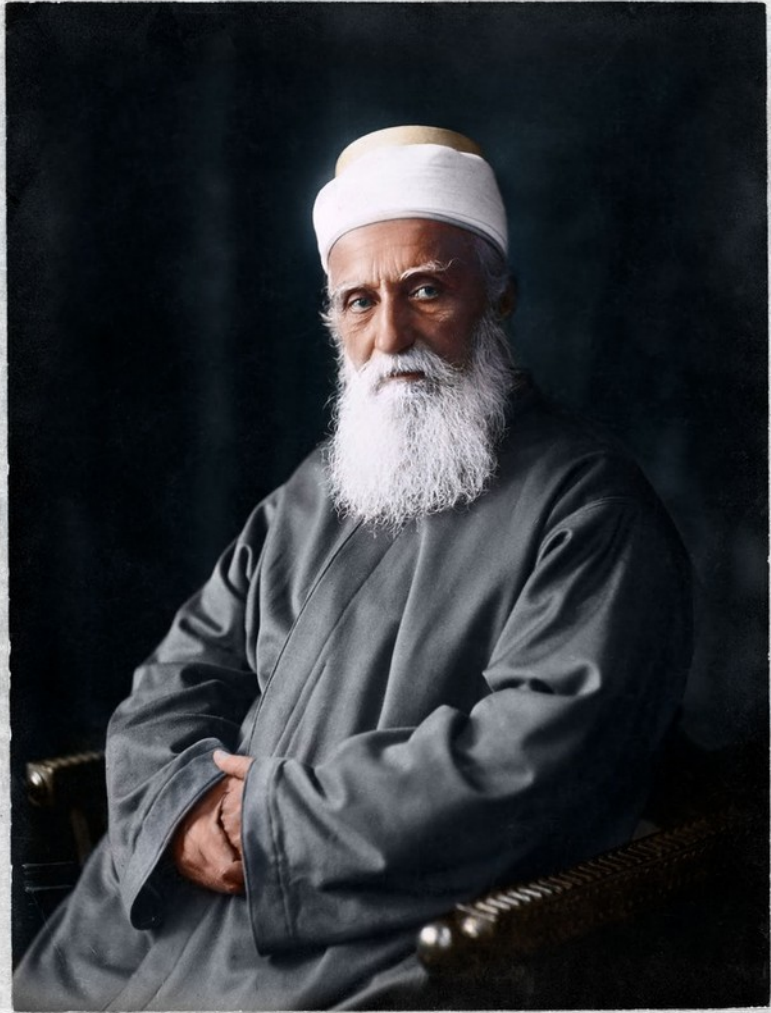
Service

Service to the friends is service to the Kingdom of God, and consideration shown to the poor is one of the greatest teachings of God.

(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 27)

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Service

Be ye loving fathers to the orphan, and a refuge to the helpless, and a treasury for the poor, and a cure for the ailing. Be ye the helpers of every victim of oppression, the patrons of the disadvantaged. Think ye at all times of rendering some service to every member of the human race.

(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 3)

Service

If only the friends could realise it, the glory of Our Faith is not that people with unique abilities do the work of the Cause, but that it is done by the sacrifice of loving and devoted souls who arise selflessly to undertake work they feel themselves incompetent, sometimes, to achieve. God works through them and endows them with gifts they did not dream they could ever possess.

(Shoghi Effendi, written on his behalf)

Service

"...There is nothing that brings success in the Faith like service. Service is the magnet which draws the divine confirmations. Thus, when a person is active, they are blessed by the Holy Spirit. When they are inactive, the Holy Spirit cannot find a repository in their being, and thus they are deprived of its healing and quickening rays."

([From letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 12, 1952:
Living the Life, p. 18)

Service

"...An individual must center his whole heart and mind on service to the Cause, in accordance with the high standards set by Bahá'u'lláh. When this is done, the hosts of the Supreme Concourse will come to the assistance of the individual, and every difficulty and trial will gradually be overcome."

(From letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 6, 1954: *Living the Life*, p. 19)

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We assure the youth that we are mindful of the many important decisions they must make as they tread the path of service to Bahá'u'lláh. We will offer our ardent supplications at the Holy Threshold that all will be divinely guided and that they will attract the blessings of the All-Merciful.

(Messages from the Universal House of Justice -- 1968-1973, p. 20)

Three Fields of Service

Three great fields of service lie open before young Bahá'ís, in which they will simultaneously be remaking the character of human society and preparing themselves for the work they can undertake later in their lives.

(Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance* -- Messages 1963-1968, p. 94)

Three Fields of Service

First, the foundation of all their other accomplishments, is their study of the teachings, the spiritualization of their lives, and the forming of their characters in accordance with the standards of Bahá'u'lláh. As the moral standards of the people around us collapse and decay, whether of the centuries-old civilizations of the East, the more recent cultures of Christendom and Islam, or of the rapidly changing tribal societies of the world, the Bahá'ís must increasingly stand out as pillars of righteousness and forbearance.

(Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance* -- Messages 1963-1968, p. 94)

Three Fields of Service

The life of a Bahá'í will be characterized by truthfulness and decency; he will walk uprightly among his fellowmen, dependent upon none save God, yet linked by bonds of love and brotherhood with all mankind; he will be entirely detached from the loose standards, the decadent theories, the frenetic experimentation, the desperation of present-day society, will look upon his neighbors with a bright and friendly face, and be a beacon light and a haven for all those who would emulate his strength of character and assurance of soul.

(Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance* -- Messages 1963-1968, p. 94)

Three Fields of Service

The second field of service, which is linked intimately with the first, is teaching the Faith, particularly to their fellow youth, among whom are some of the most open and seeking minds in the world. Not yet having acquired all the responsibilities of a family or a long-established home and job, youth can the more easily choose where they will live and study or work.

(Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance* -- Messages 1963-1968, p. 94)

Three Fields of Service

In the world at large young people travel hither and thither seeking amusement, education, and experiences. Bahá'í youth, bearing the incomparable treasure of the World of God for this Day, can harness this mobility into service for mankind and can choose their places of residence, their areas of travel, and their types of work with the goal in mind of how they can best serve the Faith.

(Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance* -- Messages 1963-1968, p. 94)

Three Fields of Service

The third field of service is the preparation by youth for their later years. It is the obligation of a Bahá'í to educate his children; likewise it is the duty of the children to acquire knowledge of the arts and sciences and to learn a trade or a profession whereby they, in turn, can earn their living and support their families. This, for a Bahá'í youth, is in itself a service to God, a service, moreover, which can be combined with teaching the Faith and often with pioneering.

Three Fields of Service

The Bahá'í community will need men and women of many skills and qualifications; for, as it grows in size the sphere of its activities in the life of society will increase and diversify. Let Bahá'í youth, therefore, consider the best ways in which they can use and develop their native abilities for the service of mankind and the Cause of God, whether this be as farmers, teachers, doctors, artisans, musicians, or any one of the multitude of livelihoods that are open to them.

Tablet of Visitation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

*Give me Thy grace to serve Thy loved ones,
strengthen me in my servitude to Thee,
illumine my brow with the light of adoration
in Thy court of holiness, and of prayer to Thy
kingdom of grandeur.*

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, from His [Tablet of Visitation](#))

Tablet of Visitation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Help me to be selfless at the heavenly entrance of Thy gate, and aid me to be detached from all things within Thy holy precincts. Lord! Give me to drink from the chalice of selflessness; with its robe clothe me, and in its ocean immerse me.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, from His [Tablet of Visitation](#))

Tablet of Visitation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Make me as dust in the pathway of Thy loved ones, and grant that I may offer up my soul for the earth ennobled by the footsteps of Thy chosen ones in Thy path, O Lord of Glory in the Highest.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, from His Tablet of Visitation)

Tablet of Visitation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

*With this prayer doth Thy servant call Thee,
at dawntide and in the night-season. Fulfill
his heart's desire, O Lord! Illumine his heart,
gladden his bosom, kindle his light, that he
may serve Thy Cause and Thy servants.*

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, from His Tablet of Visitation)