

The fourth principle or teaching of Bahá'u'lláh 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.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá

...there must be no difference in the education of male and female in order that womankind may develop equal capacity and importance with man in the social and economic equation.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá

...it is apparent that whenever the ties between nations become strengthened and the exchange

of commodities accelerated, and any economic principle is established in one country, it will ultimately affect the other countries and universal benefits will result.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá

The secrets of the whole economic question are divine in nature, and are concerned with the world of the heart and spirit.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá

Economics must commence with the farmer and thence reach out and embrace the other classes, inasmuch as the number of farmers is greater than that of other groups. Therefore it is becoming that the economic problem be solved for the farmer first, for the farmer is the first active agent in the body politic.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá

The rich should be merciful to the poor, but with their free-will, not with force. Should it be with force it would be useless. It should be according to law and not by violence, so that through a general law every one might know his duty.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá

The essence of the Bahá'í spirit is that, in order to establish a better social order and economic

condition, there must be allegiance to the laws and principles of government.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá

No more trusts will remain in the future. The question of the trusts will be wiped away entirely. Also, 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 share, should be divided among both. In reality, so far, great injustice has befallen the common people.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá

In brief: from among the wise men of every village a Board should be organized, and the 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. At the time of the harvest, with the approval of the members of the Board, a determined percentage of the entire harvest should be appropriated for the storehouse.

This storehouse is to have seven revenues: tithes, taxes on animals, wealth without inheritors, all things who owner cannot be

discovered, a third of all treasure found in the ground, a third of the output of the mines, and voluntary contributions.

On the other hand, there are seven expenditures. First, the general running expenses of the institution, salaries, etc., and the administration of public safety, including a department of hygiene.

Second, tithes to the general government. Third, taxes on animals for the State. Fourth, support of an orphanage. Fifth, support of cripples and incurables. Sixth, support of educational institutions. Seventh, supplying any deficiency in the expenses of the poor.

If anything is left in the storehouse, that must be transferred to the general treasury of the nation for general national expenses. When such a system is established, each individual member of the body politic will live in the utmost comfort and happiness, and the degrees will be preserved. There will be no disturbance of these degrees whatsoever, for they are the essential needs of the body politic.

`Abdu'l-Bahá

The question of socialization is very important. 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 should be elected from the parliaments and the nobles of the nations. These must plan, with the utmost wisdom and power, so that neither the capitalists suffer from 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 strongly preserved. Also the rights of the capitalists are to be protected. When such a general plan is adopted by the will of both sides, should a strike occur, all the governments of the world collectively should resist it.

`Abdu'l-Bahá

The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be co-ordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated....

The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear.

Shoghi Effendi

The Economy

A brief selection from the

Bahá'í Writings