

# Sincerity: The Foundation Stone of Faith

By Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi

Compiled by Ehsan Bayat

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sin-cer-i-ty n. The quality or condition of being sincere; genuineness, honesty, and freedom from duplicity.

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O friends of God, verily the Pen of Sincerity enjoineth on you the greatest faithfulness. By the Life of God, its light is more evident than the light of the sun! In its light and its brightness and its radiance every light is eclipsed. We desire of God that He will not withhold from His cities and lands the radiant effulgence of the Sun of Faithfulness. We have directed all in the nights and in the days to faithfulness, chastity, purity, and constancy; and have enjoined good deeds and well-pleasing qualities.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *A Traveller’s Narrative*, p. 46)

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O saints of God! at the end of Our discourse We enjoin on you once again chastity, faithfulness, godliness, sincerity, and purity. Lay aside the evil and adopt the good. This is that whereunto ye are commanded in the Book of God, the Knowing, the Wise. Well is it with those who practice [this injunction]. At this moment the pen

crieth out, saying, 'O saints of God, regard the horizon of uprightness, and be quit, severed, and free from what is beside this. There is no strength and no power save in God.'

(‘Abdu’L-Bahá, A Traveller’s Narrative, p. 48)

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If any one of you enters a city he must become the center of attraction because of the sincerity, faithfulness, love, honesty, fidelity, truthfulness and loving-kindness of his disposition and nature toward all the inhabitants of the world, that the people of the city may all cry out: “This person is unquestionably a Bahá’í; for his manners, his behavior, his conduct, his morals, his nature and his disposition are of the attributes of the Bahá’ís.” Until you do attain to this station, you have not fulfilled the Covenant and the Testament of God. For according to the irrefutable texts, He has taken from us a firm covenant that we may live and act in accord with the divine exhortations, commands and lordly teachings.

(‘Abdu’L-Bahá, Bahá’í World Faith - ‘Abdu’L-Bahá Section, p. 400)

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My hope for you is that as you travel through the universe of existence you will ever become acquainted with new and wonderful significances; that your knowledge will ever be increased - knowledge without limitation; then you will understand the realities existing in all kingdoms. Capacity is in accordance with striving and sincerity.

(‘Abdu’L-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 118)

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Do not despair! Work steadily. Sincerity and love will conquer hate. How many seemingly impossible events are coming to pass in these days! Set your faces steadily towards the Light of the World. Show love to all; ‘Love is the breath of the Holy Spirit in the heart of Man’. Take courage! God never forsakes His children who strive and work and pray! Let your hearts be filled with the strenuous desire that tranquillity and harmony may encircle all this warring world. So will success crown your efforts, and with the universal brotherhood will come the Kingdom of God in peace and goodwill.

(‘Abdu’L-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 30)

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All over the world one hears beautiful sayings extolled and noble precepts admired.

All men say they love what is good, and hate everything that is evil! Sincerity is to be admired, whilst lying is despicable. Faith is a virtue, and treachery is a disgrace to humanity. It is a blessed thing to gladden the hearts of men, and wrong to be the cause of pain. To be kind and merciful is right, while to hate is sinful. Justice is a noble quality and injustice an iniquity. That it is one's duty to be pitiful and harm no one, and to avoid jealousy and malice at all costs. Wisdom is the glory of man, not ignorance; light, not darkness! It is a good thing to turn one's face toward God, and foolishness to ignore Him. That it is our duty to guide man upward, and not to mislead him and be the cause of his downfall.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 79)

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Such obedience and submission is made incumbent and obligatory upon all by the clear Text of the Abhá Beauty. Therefore the believers, in obedience to the command of the True One, show the utmost sincerity and goodwill towards all nations; and should any soul act contrary to the laws of the government he would consider himself responsible before God, deserving divine wrath and chastisement for his sin and wrongdoing.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 307)

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The Abhá Beauty—may my life be a sacrifice for His loved ones—hath offered prayers on behalf of Their Imperial Majesties. Gracious God! How strange that, notwithstanding these conclusive proofs, every day some event transpireth and difficulties arise. But we, and the friends of God, should on no account slacken our efforts to be loyal, sincere and men of good will. We should at all times manifest our truthfulness and sincerity, nay rather, we must be constant in our faithfulness and trustworthiness, and occupy ourselves in offering prayers for the good of all.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 308)

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Thou who art neath the shelter of God, and under the shadow of the Tree of His Covenant, why sorrow and repine? Rest thou assured and feel confident. Observe the written commandments of thy Lord with joy and peace, with earnestness and sincerity; and be thou the well-wisher of thy country and thy government. His grace shall assist thee at all times, His blessings shall be bestowed upon thee, and thy heart's desire shall be realized.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 323)

Now observe what was the degree of the sincerity, the zeal, the spiritual feeling, the obligation of friendship, and the good actions of a believer in Christ, so that Galen, the philosophical physician, although he was not of the Christian religion, should yet bear witness to the good morals and the perfections of these people, to the point of saying that they were true philosophers. These virtues, these morals, were obtained not only through good actions, for if virtue were only a matter of obtaining and giving forth good, as this lamp is lighted and illuminates the house—without doubt this illumination is a benefit—then why do we not praise the lamp? The sun causes all the beings of the earth to increase, and by its heat and light gives growth and development: is there a greater benefit than that? Nevertheless, as this good does not come from goodwill and from the love and knowledge of God, it is imperfect.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 303)

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I beseech the Threshold of Unity with all humility and supplication to make thee confirmed in His service and to enable thee to be serviceable in the Holy Threshold; that thou mayest not be a moment at rest nor take a breath of composure; nay, rather to pass all thy life in this greatest gift and this supreme favor employed in diffusing the breath of God; that thy sincerity of heart, thy sanctity and purity may increase and that thou mayest become entirely separated from aught else save God. Except a man be purified and sanctified from the soil of his dependence on this world, the spiritual purity will not become manifest in him. The more the mirror is clear and pure the greater will the rays and the bounties of the Sun of Truth show forth from it.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v1*, p. 157)

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I supplicate God, beseech Him and pray to Him that He may deliver the souls from the deluge of tests and kindle the lamp of sincerity in the midst of the hearts. As to thee—O thou who art sincere in the Cause of God, looking unto the Kingdom of God and uttering the praise of God!—thank thou Him for that by reason of which He hath made thee wholly faithful in His Cause, kindled thy heart with the fire of the Testament, illumined thy mind with the light and conveyed unto thy spirit the glad-tidings of the breaths of the Holy Spirit in the world of effulgence. Therefore, roll up thy sleeves to serve the Covenant, make the hearts firm in the Covenant of the beloved Lord, create harmony and agreement among the believers and impart to

them the glad-tidings of the confirmation which they will receive from God if the differences of opinion be removed and if they unite and agree, be firm in spreading the fragrance of God, divulging the traces and chanting the signs of God. Verily, I send thee good news of the confirmation which thou shalt receive, the like of which was never seen by the eyes in those regions, and of the success, the lights of which will brilliantly shine in those regions—if thou wilt arise with all thy power to assist the Testament of God and to serve the Covenant of God.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v1, p. 161)

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Likewise, they must treat with and behave toward all the governments, nations, communities, kings and subjects with the utmost sincerity, trustworthiness, straightforwardness, love and kindness.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v2, p. 436)

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If thou desirest to soften the hearts and bring thy friends under the shadow of the Tree of Life, show forth firmness and integrity; day by day increase thy sincerity and severance until by the power of the Truth thou wilt soften and subdue the hearts and awaken the souls of the heedless.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v2, p. 456)

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Turn thou to the Kingdom of thy great Lord with a truthful heart and with all devotion, sincerity and great spirituality and ask to be healed from pain and passions and be confident in the great bounty of thy Lord.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v3, p. 636)

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If she advanceth in this manner, maketh more effort and day by day groweth in spirituality, sincerity, devotion and severance, in a short time she will become purely merciful and will spiritualize others; she will progress in the stations of sanctity and purity; she will become the possessor of a fluent speech and will find her heart brilliant and full of serenity and faith to such an extent that her pure breath will so take effect even in stone, tree and clay (i.e., in all people), that she, herself, will be astonished. When the interior parts of musical instruments become clear and polished, their tone will take effect and warm the hearts.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá v3, pp. 720-721)

If you arise in the Cause of God with divine power, heavenly grace, the sincerity of the Kingdom, a merciful heart and decisive intention, it is certain that the world of humanity will be entirely illumined, the moralities of mankind will become merciful, the foundations of the Most Great Peace will be laid, and the oneness of the kingdom of man will become a reality. This is the great bounty I desire for you, and I pray and supplicate the divine threshold, imploring in your behalf.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 55)

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In brief, you must become distinguished in all the virtues of the human world—for faithfulness and sincerity, for justice and fidelity, for firmness and steadfastness, for philanthropic deeds and service to the human world, for love toward every human being, for unity and accord with all people, for removing prejudices and promoting international peace. Finally, you must become distinguished for heavenly illumination and for acquiring the bestowals of God. I desire this distinction for you. This must be the point of distinction among you.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 190)

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Bahá’u’lláh is the real Physician. He has diagnosed human conditions and indicated the necessary treatment. The essential principles of His healing remedies are the knowledge and love of God, severance from all else save God, turning our faces in sincerity toward the Kingdom of God, implicit faith, firmness and fidelity, loving-kindness toward all creatures and the acquisition of the divine virtues indicated for the human world. These are the fundamental principles of progress, civilization, international peace and the unity of mankind. These are the essentials of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings, the secret of everlasting health, the remedy and healing for man.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 205)

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There is a power which purifies the mirror from dust and transforms its reflection into intense brilliancy and radiance so that spiritual susceptibilities may chasten the hearts and heavenly bestowals sanctify them. What is the dust which obscures the mirror? It is attachment to the world, avarice, envy, love of luxury and comfort, haughtiness and self-desire; this is the dust which prevents reflection of the rays of

the Sun of Reality in the mirror. The natural emotions are blameworthy and are like rust which deprives the heart of the bounties of God. But sincerity, justice, humility, severance, and love for the believers of God will purify the mirror and make it radiant with reflected rays from the Sun of Truth.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 244)

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If he is a Bahá’í in reality, his deeds and actions will be decisive proofs of it. What are the requirements? Love for mankind, sincerity toward all, reflecting the oneness of the world of humanity, philanthropy, becoming enkindled with the fire of the love of God, attainment to the knowledge of God and that which is conducive to human welfare.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 336)

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The third requirement of perfection is to arise with complete sincerity and purity of purpose to educate the masses: to exert the utmost effort to instruct them in the various branches of learning and useful sciences, to encourage the development of modern progress, to widen the scope of commerce, industry and the arts, to further such measures as will increase the people’s wealth. For the mass of the population is uninformed as to these vital agencies which would constitute an immediate remedy for society’s chronic ills.

It is essential that scholars and the spiritually learned should undertake in all sincerity and purity of intent and for the sake of God alone, to counsel and exhort the masses and clarify their vision with that collyrium which is knowledge.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 39)

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Sincerity is the foundation-stone of faith. That is, a religious individual must disregard his personal desires and seek in whatever way he can wholeheartedly to serve the public interest; and it is impossible for a human being to turn aside from his own selfish advantages and sacrifice his own good for the good of the community except through true religious faith.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 96)

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Universal benefits derive from the grace of the Divine religions, for they lead their true followers to sincerity of intent, to high purpose, to purity and spotless honor, to

surpassing kindness and compassion, to the keeping of their covenants when they have covenanted, to concern for the rights of others, to liberality, to justice in every aspect of life, to humanity and philanthropy, to valor and to unflagging efforts in the service of mankind. It is religion, to sum up, which produces all human virtues, and it is these virtues which are the bright candles of civilization. If a man is not characterized by these excellent qualities, it is certain that he has never attained to so much as a drop out of the fathomless river of the waters of life that flows through the teachings of the Holy Books, nor caught the faintest breath of the fragrant breezes that blow from the gardens of God; for nothing on earth can be demonstrated by words alone, and every level of existence is known by its signs and symbols, and every degree in man's development has its identifying mark.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 98)

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It behoveth, likewise, the loved ones of God to be forbearing towards their fellow-men, and to be so sanctified and detached from all things, and to evince such sincerity and fairness, that all the peoples of the earth may recognize them as the trustees of God amongst men.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 242)

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The purpose of the one true God in manifesting Himself is to summon all mankind to truthfulness and sincerity, to piety and trustworthiness, to resignation and submissiveness to the Will of God, to forbearance and kindness, to uprightness and wisdom. His object is to array every man with the mantle of a saintly character, and to adorn him with the ornament of holy and goodly deeds.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 299)

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The second *Ṭaráz* is to consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship, to proclaim that which the Speaker on Sinai hath set forth and to observe fairness in all matters.

They that are endued with sincerity and faithfulness should associate with all the peoples and kindreds of the earth with joy and radiance, inasmuch as consorting with people hath promoted and will continue to promote unity and concord, which in turn are conducive to the maintenance of order in the world and to the regeneration of nations. Blessed are such as hold fast to the cord of kindness and tender mercy and are free from animosity and hatred.



(Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 35-36)

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In these days truthfulness and sincerity are sorely afflicted in the clutches of falsehood, and justice is tormented by the scourge of injustice. The smoke of corruption hath enveloped the whole world in such wise that naught can be seen in any direction save regiments of soldiers and nothing is heard from any land but the clashing of swords. We beseech God, the True One, to strengthen the wielders of His power in that which will rehabilitate the world and bring tranquillity to the nations.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 39)

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O thou who hast turned thy gaze towards My face! In these days there occurred that which hath plunged Me into dire sadness. Certain wrong-doers who profess allegiance to the Cause of God committed such deeds as have caused the limbs of sincerity, of honesty, of justice, of equity to quake.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 59)

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The fruits that best befit the tree of human life are trustworthiness and godliness, truthfulness and sincerity; but greater than all, after recognition of the unity of God, praised and glorified be He, is regard for the rights that are due to one's parents.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 139)

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The people of Bahá must associate and deal with each other with the utmost love and sincerity. They should be mindful of the interests of all, especially the friends of God.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 209)

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Furthermore, the sign of truth and falsehood is designated and appointed in the Book. By this divinely-appointed touchstone, the claims and pretensions of all men must needs be assayed, so that the truthful may be known and distinguished from the imposter. This touchstone is no other than this verse: "Wish for death, if ye are men of truth."<sup>1</sup> Consider these martyrs of unquestionable sincerity, to whose truthfulness testifieth the explicit text of the Book, and all of whom, as thou hast witnessed, have sacrificed their life, their substance, their wives, their children, their all, and ascended unto the loftiest chambers of Paradise.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 209)

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'án, 2:94

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The All-Merciful saith in the Qur'án, His abiding testimony unto all the peoples of the world: "Wish ye then for death, if ye be men of truth."<sup>2</sup> Behold how He hath declared the yearning for death to be the touchstone of sincerity! And, in the luminous mirror of thy judgement, it is doubtless clear and evident which people have chosen, in this day, to lay down their lives in the path of the Beloved of the worlds. Indeed, were the books supporting the beliefs of this people to be written with the blood spilled in the path of God—exalted be His glory!—then countless volumes would have already appeared amongst men for all to see.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 114-115)

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<sup>2</sup> Qur'án, 2:94

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O Minister of the Sháh! Fear thou God, besides Whom there is none other God but Him, the Sovereign Truth, the Just, and lay aside thy dominion, for We, by the leave of God, the All-Wise, inherit the earth and all who are upon it, and He shall rightfully be a witness unto thee and unto the Sháh. Were ye to obey the Remembrance of God with absolute sincerity, We guarantee, by the leave of God, that on the Day of Resurrection, a vast dominion shall be yours in His eternal Paradise.

(The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 42)

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By God! Should one who is in affliction or grief read this Tablet with absolute sincerity, God will dispel his sadness, solve his difficulties and remove his afflictions.

(Bahá'í Prayers, p. 211)

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The followers of sincerity and faithfulness must consort with all the people of the world with joy and fragrance; for association is always conducive to union and harmony, and union and harmony are the cause of the order of the world and the life of nations. Blessed are they who hold fast to the rope of compassion and kindness and are detached from animosity and hatred!

(Bahá'í World Faith, p. 168)

They must not make light of any matter, but speak in truthfulness and sincerity. The people of Bahá must not refuse to discharge the due reward of any one, and must respect possessors of talent; and they must not stain their tongues with slander like unto the former community. In this day the sun of arts and crafts is manifest from the horizon of the heaven of the Occident, and the river of skill is flowing from the sea of that part. One must speak with justice and recognize the worth of benefits. By the life of God, the word Justice is shining and luminous like unto the sun: We beg of God to illuminate all with its lights. Verily, He is powerful in all things and is worthy to grant!

In these days, truthfulness and sincerity are captive in the claws of falsehood, and justice is oppressed by the scourges of injustice. The smoke of corruption has so enveloped the world that naught is seen from any direction save armies and naught is heard from any region except the clashing of swords. We beg of God to assist the appearances of His power in that which is conducive to the reformation of the world and the welfare of nations.

(Bahá'í World Faith, p. 170)

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Purity of heart, honesty of mind, sincerity of motive were characteristics deeply prized by Shoghi Effendi. These characteristics he felt were strongly represented in the so-called primitive peoples; they drew him to them and increased his conviction that the Cause of God has a tremendous future amongst the dark-skinned peoples of the world and that they have great racial gifts of mind and heart to bring to the service of this Faith.

(Ministry of the Custodians, p. 114)

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The believers, and particularly those who have not had sufficient experience in teaching, should be very careful in the way they present the teachings of the Cause. Sincerity, devotion and Faith are not the sole conditions of successful teaching. Tactfulness, extreme caution and wisdom are equally important. We should not be in a hurry when we announce the message to the public and we should be careful to present the teachings in their entirety and not to alter them for the sake of others. Allegiance to the Faith cannot be partial and half-hearted. Either we should accept the Cause without any qualification whatsoever or cease calling ourselves Bahá'ís. The new believers should be made to realize that it is not sufficient for them to accept

some aspects of the teachings and reject those which cannot suit their mentality in order to become fully recognized and active followers of the Faith. In this way all sorts of misunderstandings will vanish and the organic unity of the Cause will be preserved.

(Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, p. 11)

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“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.”

(Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 39)

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