

TEACHING

CXLIV. The Pen of the Most High hath decreed and imposed upon every one the obligation to teach this Cause.... God will, no doubt, inspire whosoever detacheth himself from all else but Him, and will cause the pure waters of wisdom and utterance to gush out and flow copiously from his heart. Verily, thy Lord, the All-Merciful, is powerful to do as He willeth, and ordaineth whatsoever He pleaseth.

Go thou straight on and persevere in His service. Say: O people! The Day, promised unto you in all the Scriptures, is now come.

[excerpts from Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha p264-274]

To sum it up, the Ancient Beauty was ever, during His chains, or living under a sword, or subjected to extreme suffering and torment, or held in the Most Great Prison. Because of His physical weakness, brought on by His afflictions, His blessed body was worn away to a breath; it was light as a cobweb from long grieving. And His reason for shouldering this heavy load and enduring all this to high heaven--His reason for putting on the heavy iron chains and for becoming the very embodiment of utter resignation and meekness, was to lead every soul on earth to concord, to fellow-feeling, to oneness; to make known amongst all peoples the sign of the singleness of God, so that at last the primal oneness deposited at the heart of all of 'No difference canst thou see in the creation of the God of Mercy,' would cast abroad its rays.

Now is the time, O ye beloved of the Lord, for ardent endeavour. Struggle ye, and strive. And since the Ancient Beauty was exposed by day and night on the field of martyrdom, let us in our turn labour hard, and hear and ponder the counsels of God; let us fling away our lives, and renounce our brief and numbered days. Let us turn our eyes away from empty fantasies of this world's divergent forms, and serve instead this pre-eminent purpose, this grand design. Let us not, because of our own imaginings, cut down this tree that the hand of heavenly grace hath planted; let us not, with the dark clouds of our illusions, our selfish interests, blot out the glory that streameth from the Abha Realm. Let us not be as barriers that wall out the rolling ocean of Almighty God. Let us not prevent the pure, sweet scents from the garden of the All-Glorious

Beauty from blowing far and wide. Let us not, on this day of reunion, shut out the vernal downpour of blessings from on high. Let us not consent that the splendours of the Sun of Truth should ever fade and disappear. These are the admonitions of God, as set forth in His Holy Books, His Scriptures, His Tablets that tell out His counsellings to the sincere.

The glory rest upon you, and God's mercy, and God's blessings.

O ye servants of the Sacred Threshold! The triumphant hosts of the Celestial Concourse, arrayed and marshalled in the Realms above, stand ready and expectant to assist and assure victory to that valiant horseman who with confidence spurs on his charger into the arena of service. Well is it with that fearless warrior, who armed with the power of true Knowledge, hastens unto the field, disperses the armies of ignorance, and scatters the hosts of error, who holds aloft the Standard of Divine Guidance, and sounds the Clarion of Victory. By the righteousness of the Lord! He hath achieved a glorious triumph and obtained the true victory.

209. O ye servants of the Blessed Beauty!... It is clear that in this day, confirmations from the unseen world are encompassing all those who deliver the divine Message.

Should the work of teaching lapse, these confirmations would be entirely cut off, since it is impossible for the loved ones of God to receive assistance unless they teach.

Under all conditions, the teaching must be carried forward, but with wisdom. If the work cannot proceed openly, then let them teach in private, and thus engender spirituality and fellowship among the children of men. If, for example, each and every one of the believers would become a true friend to one of the unheeding, and, conducting himself with absolute rectitude, associate with this soul, treat him with the utmost kindness, himself exemplify the divine instructions he hath received, the good qualities and behaviour patterns, and at all times act in accord with the admonitions of God--it is certain that little by little he will succeed in awakening that previously heedless individual, and in changing his ignorance to knowledge of the truth.

Souls are inclined toward estrangement. Steps should first be taken to do away with this estrangement, for only

then will the Word take effect. If a believer showeth kindness to one of the neglectful, and, with great love, gradually leadeth him to an understanding of the validity of the Holy Cause, so that he may come to know the fundamentals of God's Faith and the implications thereof--such a one will certainly be transformed, excepting only those seldom-encountered individuals who are even as ashes, whose hearts are 'hard as rocks, or harder still.'^{+F1}

If every one of the friends should strive in this way to guide one soul aright, the number of believers will double every year; and this can be accomplished with prudence and wisdom, and no harm whatever would result therefrom.

Furthermore, the teachers must travel about, and if spreading the Message openly should cause a disturbance, then instead, let them stimulate and train the believers, inspire them, delight them, rejoice their hearts, revive and refresh them with the sweet savours of holiness.

210. O ye roses in the garden of God's love! O ye bright lamps in the assemblage of His knowledge! May the soft breathings of God pass over you, may the Glory of God illumine the horizon of your hearts. Ye are the waves of the deep sea of knowledge, ye are the massed armies on the plains of certitude, ye are the stars in the skies of God's compassion, ye are the stones that put the people of perdition to flight, ye are clouds of divine pity over the gardens of life, ye are the abundant grace of God's oneness that is shed upon the essences of all created things.

On the outspread tablet of this world, ye are the verses of His singleness; and atop lofty palace towers, ye are the banners of the Lord. In His bowers are ye the blossoms and sweet-smelling herbs, in the rose garden of the spirit the nightingales that utter plaintive cries. Ye are the birds that soar upward into the firmament of knowledge, the royal falcons on the wrist of God.

Why then are ye quenched, why silent, why leaden and dull? Ye must shine forth like the lightning, and raise up a clamouring like unto the great sea. Like a candle must ye shed your light, and even as the soft breezes of God must ye blow across the world. Even as sweet breaths from heavenly bowers, as musk-laden winds from the gardens of the Lord, must ye perfume the air for the people of knowledge, and even as the splendours shed by the true Sun, must ye

illumine the hearts of humankind. For ye are the life-laden winds, ye are the jessamine-scents from the gardens of the saved. Bring then life to the dead, and awaken those who slumber. In the darkness of the world be ye radiant flames; in the sands of perdition, be ye well-springs of the water of life, be ye guidance from the Lord God. Now is the time to serve, now is the time to be on fire. Know ye the value of this chance, this favourable juncture that is limitless grace, ere it slip from your hands.

Soon will our handful of days, our vanishing life, be gone, and we shall pass, empty-handed, into the hollow that is dug for those who speak no more; wherefore must we bind our hearts to the manifest Beauty, and cling to the lifeline that faileth never. We must gird ourselves for service, kindle love's flame, and burn away in its heat. We must loose our tongues till we set the wide world's heart afire, and with bright rays of guidance blot out the armies of the night, and then, for His sake, on the field of sacrifice, fling down our lives.

Thus let us scatter over every people the treasured gems of the recognition of God, and with the decisive blade of the tongue, and the sure arrows of knowledge, let us defeat the hosts of self and passion, and hasten onward to the site of martyrdom, to the place where we die for the Lord. And then, with flying flags, and to the beat of drums, let us pass into the realm of the All-Glorious, and join the Company on high.

Well is it with the doers of great deeds.

211. When the friends do not endeavour to spread the message, they fail to remember God befittingly, and will not witness the tokens of assistance and confirmation from the Abha Kingdom nor comprehend the divine mysteries. However, when the tongue of the teacher is engaged in teaching, he will naturally himself be stimulated, will become a magnet attracting the divine aid and bounty of the Kingdom, and will be like unto the bird at the hour of dawn, which itself becometh exhilarated by its own singing, its warbling and its melody.

212. It is at such times that the friends of God avail themselves of the occasion, seize the opportunity, rush forth and win the prize. If their task is to be confined to good conduct and advice, nothing will be accomplished.

They must speak out, expound the proofs, set forth clear arguments, draw irrefutable conclusions establishing the truth of the manifestation of the Sun of Reality.

213. The teaching work should under all conditions be actively pursued by the believers because divine confirmations are dependent upon it. Should a Baha'i refrain from being fully, vigorously and wholeheartedly involved in the teaching work he will undoubtedly be deprived of the blessings of the Abha Kingdom. Even so, this activity should be tempered with wisdom--not that wisdom which requireth one to be silent and forgetful of such an obligation, but rather that which requireth one to display divine tolerance, love, kindness, patience, a goodly character, and holy deeds. In brief, encourage the friends individually to teach the Cause of God and draw their attention to this meaning of wisdom mentioned in the Writings, which is itself the essence of teaching the Faith--but all this to be done with the greatest tolerance, so that heavenly assistance and divine confirmation may aid the friends.

214. Follow thou the way of thy Lord, and say not that which the ears cannot bear to hear, for such speech is like luscious food given to small children. However palatable, rare and rich the food may be, it cannot be assimilated by the digestive organs of a suckling child. Therefore unto every one who hath a right, let his settled measure be given.

'Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it.' Such is the consummate wisdom to be observed in thy pursuits. Be not oblivious thereof, if thou wishest to be a man of action under all conditions. First diagnose the disease and identify the malady, then prescribe the remedy, for such is the perfect method of the skilful physician.

215. My hope from the grace of the One true Lord is that thou wilt be enabled to spread the fragrances of God among the tribes. This is extremely important....

If thou succeedest in rendering this service thou shalt excel and be the leader in the field.

216. Rest assured that the breathings of the Holy Spirit

will loosen thy tongue. Speak, therefore; speak out with great courage at every meeting. When thou art about to begin thine address, turn first to Baha'u'llah, and ask for the confirmations of the Holy Spirit, then open thy lips and say whatever is suggested to thy heart; this, however, with the utmost courage, dignity and conviction. It is my hope that from day to day your gatherings will grow and flourish, and that those who are seeking after truth will hearken therein to reasoned arguments and conclusive proofs. I am with you heart and soul at every meeting; be sure of this.

217. The teacher, when teaching, must be himself fully enkindled, so that his utterance, like unto a flame of fire, may exert influence and consume the veil of self and passion. He must also be utterly humble and lowly so that others may be edified, and be totally self-effaced and evanescent so that he may teach with the melody of the Concourse on high--otherwise his teaching will have no effect.

218. O ye close and dear friends of Abdu'l-Baha!

In the Orient scatter perfumes,
And shed splendours on the West.
Carry light unto the Bulgar,
And the Slav with life invest.

One year after the ascension of Baha'u'llah, there came this verse from the lips of the Centre of the Covenant. The Covenant-breakers found it strange indeed, and they treated it with scorn. Yet, praised be God, its effects are now manifest, its power revealed, its import clear; for by God's grace, today both East and West are trembling for joy, and now, from sweet waftings of holiness, the whole earth is scented with musk.

The Blessed Beauty, in unmistakable language, hath made this promise in His Book: 'We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favoured angels.'

God be thanked, that promised aid hath been vouchsafed, as is plain for all to see, and it shineth forth as clear as the sun in the heavens.

Wherefore, O ye friends of God, redouble your efforts,

strain every nerve, till ye triumph in your servitude to the Ancient Beauty, the Manifest Light, and become the cause of spreading far and wide the rays of the Day-Star of Truth. Breathe ye into the world's worn and wasted body the fresh breath of life, and in the furrows of every region sow ye holy seed. Rise up to champion this Cause; open your lips and teach. In the meeting place of life be ye a guiding candle; in the skies of this world be dazzling stars; in the gardens of unity be birds of the spirit, singing of inner truths and mysteries.

Expend your every breath of life in this great Cause and dedicate all your days to the service of Baha, so that in the end, safe from loss and deprivation, ye will inherit the heaped-up treasures of the realms above. For the days of a man are full of peril and he cannot rely on so much as a moment more of life; and still the people, who are even as a wavering mirage of illusions, tell themselves that in the end they shall reach the heights. Alas for them! The men of bygone times hugged these same fancies to their breasts, until a wave flicked over them and they returned to dust, and they found themselves excluded and bereft--all save those souls who had freed themselves from self and had flung away their lives in the pathway of God. Their bright star shone out in the skies of ancient glory, and the handed-down memories of all the ages are the proof of what I say.

Wherefore, rest ye neither day nor night and seek no ease. Tell ye the secrets of servitude, follow the pathway of service, till ye attain the promised succour that cometh from the realms of God.

O friends! Black clouds have shrouded all this earth, and the darkness of hatred and malice, of cruelty and aggression and defilement is spreading far and wide. The people, one and all, live out their lives in a heedless stupor and the chief virtues of man are held to be his rapacity and his thirst for blood. Out of all the mass of humankind God hath chosen the friends, and He hath favoured them with His guidance and boundless grace. His purpose is this, that we, all of us, should strive with our whole hearts to offer ourselves up, guide others to His path, and train the souls of men--until these frenzied beasts change to gazelles in the meadows of oneness, and these wolves to lambs of God, and these brutish creatures to angelic hosts; till the fires of hatred are

quenched, and the flame coming out of the sheltered vale of the Holy Shrine doth shed its splendours; till the foul odour of the tyrant's dunghill is blown away, and yieldeth to the pure, sweet scents that stream from the rosebeds of faith and trust. On that day will the weak of intellect draw on the bounty of the divine, Universal Mind, and they whose life is but abomination will seek out these cleansing, holy breaths.

But there needs must be souls who will manifest such bestowals, there needs must be husbandmen to till these fields, gardeners for these gardens, there needs must be fish to swim in this sea, stars to gleam in these heavens. These ailing ones must be tended by spiritual physicians, these who are the lost need gentle guides--so that from such souls the bereft may receive their portion, and the deprived obtain their share, and the poor discover in such as they unmeasured wealth, and the seekers hear from them unanswerable proofs.

O my Lord, my Defender, my Help in peril! Lowly do I entreat Thee, ailing do I come unto Thee to be healed, humbly do I cry out to Thee with my tongue, my soul, my spirit:

O God, my God! The gloom of night hath shrouded every region, and all the earth is shut away behind thick clouds. The peoples of the world are sunk in the black depths of vain illusions, while their tyrants wallow in cruelty and hate. I see nothing but the glare of searing fires that blaze upward from the nethermost abyss, I hear nothing save the thunderous roar that belloweth out from thousands upon thousands of fiery weapons of assault, while every land is crying aloud in its secret tongue: 'My riches avail me nothing, and my sovereignty hath perished!'

O my Lord, the lamps of guidance have gone out. The flames of passion are mounting high, and malevolence is ever gaining on the world. Malice and hate have overspread the face of the whole earth, and I find no souls except Thine own oppressed small band who are raising up this cry:

Make haste to love! Make haste to trust! Make haste to give! To guidance come! Come ye for harmony! To behold the Star of Day! Come here for kindliness, for ease! Come here for amity and peace!

Come and cast down your weapons of wrath, till unity is won! Come and in the Lord's true path each one help

each one.

Verily with exceeding joy, with heart and soul, do these oppressed of Thine offer themselves up for all mankind in every land. Thou seest them, O my Lord, weeping over the tears Thy people shed, mourning the grief of Thy children, condoling with humankind, suffering because of the calamities that beset all the denizens of the earth.

O my Lord, wing them with victory that they may soar upward to salvation, strengthen their loins in service to Thy people, and their backs in servitude to Thy Threshold of Holiness.

Verily Thou art the Generous, verily Thou art the Merciful! There is none other God save Thee, the Clement, the Pitiful, the Ancient of Days!