

Big History
Threshold 7
The Appearance of Agriculture
and
The Major World Religions
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Importance of Agriculture

1. Fifth: Special regard must be paid to agriculture. Although it hath been mentioned in the fifth place, unquestionably it precedeth the others.
Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Áqdas, p. 90
2. The fundamental basis of the community is agriculture, tillage of the soil. All must be producers.
'Abdu'l-Bahá: Foundations of World Unity, p. 37
3. Strive as much as possible to become proficient in the science of agriculture for in accordance with the Divine Teachings, the acquisition of sciences and the perfection of arts is considered as acts of worship. If a man engages with all his power in the acquisition of a science or in the perfection of an art, it is as if he has been worshipping God in the churches and temples.
'Abdu'l-Bahá: Bahá'í World Faith, pp. 377-378
4. The question of economics must commence with the farmer and then be extended to the other classes inasmuch as the number of farmers is greater than all other classes, many many times greater. Therefore, it is fitting that the economic problem be first solved with the farmer, for the farmer is the first active agent in the body politic. In brief, from among the wise men in every village a board should be organized and the affairs of that village should be under the control of that board.
'Abdu'l-Bahá: Compilations, Lights of Guidance, p. 547
5. In addition to the problem of how to ensure peace, and all the implications of such a step, it is clear that the economic and social development of all countries is of vital importance and is a matter on which the Teachings have much to say in principle if not in detail. In this area, agriculture and the preservation of the ecological balance of the world are of fundamental interest....
Universal House of Justice: Letter to an Association for Bahá'í Studies, 31 March 1985
6. A core element of a strategy of sustainable development is the reform of agricultural policies and processes. Food production and agriculture is the world's single largest source of employment; nearly 70% of the poor in developing countries live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Although farming has been devalued by manufacturing and a rapidly expanding urban population, agriculture still represents the fundamental basis of economic and community life: malnourishment and food insecurity suffocate all attempts at development and progress. Despite this pivotal role, poverty is often concentrated in rural areas. Damage to natural resources, poor information and infrastructure often result in food insecurity, premature deaths and mass migration to urban areas in search of a better life. The

farmer must be accorded his or her rightful place in the processes of development and civilization building: as the villages are reconstructed, the cities will follow.

Bahá'í International Community: *Eradicating Poverty: Moving Forward As One*, 2008

Importance of Religion and Religious Traditions

7. Consider, for instance, the revelation of the light of the Name of God, the Educator. Behold, how in all things the evidences of such a revelation are manifest, how the betterment of all beings dependeth upon it. This education is of two kinds. The one is universal. Its influence pervadeth all things and sustaineth them. It is for this reason that God hath assumed the title, "Lord of all worlds." The other is confined to them that have come under the shadow of this Name, and sought the shelter of this most mighty Revelation. They, however, that have failed to seek this shelter, have deprived themselves of this privilege, and are powerless to benefit from the spiritual sustenance that hath been sent down through the heavenly grace of this Most Great Name....

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 189-190

8. Men have, at all times, considered every World Reformer a fomentor of discord, and have referred unto Him in terms with which all are familiar. Each time the Day-Star of Divine Revelation shed its radiance from the horizon of God's Will a great number of men denied Him, others turned aside from Him, and still others calumniated Him, and thereby withheld the servants of God from the river of loving providence of Him Who is the King of creation....

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 64-65

9. Whenever My laws appear like the sun in the heaven of Mine utterance, they must be faithfully obeyed by all, though My decree be such as to cause the heaven of every religion to be cleft asunder. He doth what He pleaseth. He chooseth; and none may question His choice. Whatsoever He, the Well-Beloved, ordaineth, the same is, verily, beloved. To this He Who is the Lord of all creation beareth Me witness. Whoso hath inhaled the sweet fragrance of the All-Merciful, and recognized the Source of this utterance, will welcome with his own eyes the shafts of the enemy, that he may establish the truth of the laws of God amongst men. Well is it with him that hath turned thereunto, and apprehended the meaning of His decisive decree.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Áqdas*, K 7; *Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 120 121; *Gleanings*, p. 333

10. Consider Moses! Armed with the rod of celestial dominion, adorned with the white hand of Divine knowledge, and proceeding from the Paran of the love of God, and wielding the serpent of power and everlasting majesty, He shone forth from the Sinai of light upon the world. He summoned all the peoples and kindreds of the earth to the kingdom of eternity, and invited them to partake of the fruit of the tree of faithfulness. Surely you are aware of the fierce opposition of Pharaoh and his people, and of the stones of idle fancy which the hands of infidels cast upon that blessed Tree...

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 19; *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 11-12

12. Consider those who rejected the Spirit when He came unto them with manifest dominion. How numerous the Pharisees who had secluded themselves in synagogues in His name, lamenting over their separation from Him, and yet when the portals of reunion were flung open and the divine Luminary shone resplendent from the Dayspring of Beauty, they disbelieved in God, the Exalted, the Mighty. They failed to attain His presence,

notwithstanding that His advent had been promised them in the Book of Isaiah as well as in the Books of the Prophets and the Messengers....

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 9-10

13. Behold how the sovereignty of Muhammad, the Messenger of God, is today apparent and manifest amongst the people. You are well aware of what befell His Faith in the early days of His Dispensation. What woeful sufferings did the hand of the infidel and erring, the divines of that age and their associates, inflict upon that spiritual Essence, that most pure and holy Being! How abundant the thorns and briars which they have strewn over His path! ...

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 24-25

14. At one time, Thou didst raise Him up, O my God, and didst attire Him with the ornament of the name of Him Who conversed with Thee (Moses), and didst through Him uncover all that Thy will had decreed and Thine irrevocable purpose ordained. At another time, Thou didst adorn Him with the name of Him Who was Thy Spirit (Jesus), and didst send Him down out of the heaven of Thy will, for the edification of Thy people, infusing thereby the spirit of life into the hearts of the sincere among Thy servants and the faithful among Thy creatures. Again, Thou didst reveal Him, decked forth by the name of Him Who was Thy Friend (Muhammad), and caused Him to shine brightly above the horizon of Hijaz, as a token of Thy power and an evidence of Thy might. Through Him Thou didst send unto Thy servants what enabled them to scale the heights of Thy unity, and to yearn over the wonders of Thy manifold knowledge and wisdom.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 50

Philosophers and Religion

15. A true philosopher would never deny God nor His evidences, rather would he acknowledge His glory and overpowering majesty which overshadow all created things. Verily We love those men of knowledge who have brought to light such things as promote the best interests of humanity, and We aided them through the potency of Our behest, for well are We able to achieve Our purpose.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 150

16. Consider Hippocrates, the physician. He was one of the eminent philosophers who believed in God and acknowledged His sovereignty. After him came Socrates who was indeed, wise, accomplished and righteous. He practised self-denial, repressed his appetites for selfish desires and turned away from material pleasures. He withdrew to the mountains where he dwelt in a cave. He dissuaded men from worshipping idols and taught them the way of God, the Lord of Mercy, until the ignorant rose up against him. They arrested him and put him to death in prison....

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 146-147

17. Although it is recognized that the contemporary men of learning are highly qualified in philosophy, arts and crafts, yet were anyone to observe with a discriminating eye he would readily comprehend that most of this knowledge hath been acquired from the sages of the past, for it is they who have laid the foundation of philosophy, reared its structure and reinforced its pillars. Thus doth thy Lord, the Ancient of Days, inform thee. The sages aforetime acquired their knowledge from the Prophets, inasmuch as the latter were the Exponents of divine philosophy and the Revealers of heavenly mysteries. Men quaffed the crystal, living waters of Their utterance, while others satisfied themselves with the dregs. Everyone receiveth a portion according to his measure. Verily He is the Equitable, the Wise.

Empedocles, who distinguished himself in philosophy, was a contemporary of David, while Pythagoras lived in the days of Solomon, son of David, and acquired Wisdom from the treasury of prophethood. It is he who claimed to have heard the whispering sound of the heavens and to have attained the station of the angels. In truth thy Lord will clearly set forth all things, if He pleaseth. Verily, He is the Wise, the All-Pervading.

The essence and the fundamentals of philosophy have emanated from the Prophets. That the people differ concerning the inner meanings and mysteries thereof is to be attributed to the divergence of their views and minds.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Áqdas*, pp. 144-145