

## **Becoming A Brilliant Star Style, Temperament and Personality**

### **Diversity Of Thought, Temperament And Character Is Desirable**

1. Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, color, form, and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men. Verily, it is the penetrating power in all things, the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 103: *Selections ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 291-292

### **Human Personality Appears In Two Aspects: The Divine And The Satanic**

2. Why do these holy Manifestations of God appear? What is the wisdom and purpose of Their coming? What is the outcome of Their mission? It is evident that human personality appears in two aspects: the image or likeness of God, and the aspect of Satan. The human reality stands between these two: the divine and the satanic. It is manifest that beyond this material body, man is endowed with another reality, which is the world of exemplars constituting the heavenly body of man. In speaking, man says, “I saw,” “I spoke,” “I went.” Who is this I? It is obvious that this I is different from this body. It is clear that when man is thinking, it is as though he were consulting with some other person. With whom is he consulting? It is evident that it is another reality, or one aside from this body, with whom he enters into consultation when he thinks, “Shall I do this work or not?” “What will be the result of my doing this?” Or when he questions the other reality, “What is the objection to this work if I do it?” And then that reality in man communicates its opinion to him concerning the point at issue. Therefore, that reality in man is clearly and obviously other than his body--an ego with which man enters into consultation and whose opinion man seeks.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 463-464

### **The Rational Soul Has Its Own Personality**

3. The rational soul--that is to say, the human spirit--has neither entered this body nor existed through it; so after the disintegration of the composition of the body, how should it be in need of a substance through which it may exist? On the contrary, the rational soul is the substance through which the body exists. The personality of the rational soul is from its beginning; it is not due to the instrumentality of the body, but the state and the personality of the rational soul may be strengthened in this world; it will make progress and will attain to the degrees of perfection,

or it will remain in the lowest abyss of ignorance, veiled and deprived from beholding the signs of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 239-240

### **The Personality Of The Rational Soul Continues To Exist In The Spiritual World**

4. Great as is the love and paternal care which our beloved Master is extending to us from on High, and unique as is the Spirit that animates today His servants in the world, yet a great deal will depend upon the character and efforts of His loved ones on whom now rests the responsibility of carrying on His work gloriously after Him. How great is the need at this moment when the promised outpourings of His grace are ready to be extended to every soul, for us all to form a broad vision of the mission of the Cause to mankind, and to do all in our power to spread it throughout the world! The eyes of the world, now that the sublime Personality of the Master has been removed from this visible plane, are turned with eager anticipation to us who are named after His name, and on whom rests primarily the responsibility to keep burning the torch that He has lit in this world. How keenly I feel at this challenging hour in the history of the Cause the need for a firm and definite determination to subordinate all our personal likings, our local interests, to the interests and requirements of the Cause of God! Now is the time to set aside, nay, to forget altogether, minor considerations regarding our internal relationships, and to present a solid united front to the world animated by no other desire but to serve and propagate His Cause.

Shoghi Effendi: *Bahá’í Administration*, p. 18; *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 3

### **The Reality Of Perfections And Personality Are Separate Entities**

5. They asked John the Baptist, “Are you Elias?” He answered, “No, I am not,” although it is said in the Gospel that John was the promised Elias, and Christ also said so clearly.<sup>1</sup> Then if John was Elias, why did he say, “I am not”? And if he was not Elias, why did Christ say that he was?

The explanation is this: not the personality, but the reality of the perfections, is meant--that is to say, the same perfections that were in Elias existed in John the Baptist and were exactly realized in him. Therefore, John the Baptist was the promised Elias. In this case not the essence,<sup>2</sup> but the qualities, are regarded. For example, there was a flower last year, and this year there is also a flower; I say the flower of last year has returned. Now, I do not mean that same flower in its exact individuality has come back; but as this flower has the same qualities as that of last year--as it has the same perfume, delicacy, color and form--I say the flower of last year has returned, and this flower is the former flower. When spring comes, we say last year’s spring has come back because all that was found in last year’s spring exists in this spring. That is why Christ said, “You will see all that happened in the days of the former Prophets.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 133

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 110, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. John 1:19-21.

6. But let us return to our subject. In the Divine Scriptures and Holy Books “return” is spoken of, but the ignorant have not understood the meaning, and those who believed in reincarnation have made conjectures on the subject. For what the divine Prophets meant by “return” is not the return of the essence, but that of the qualities; it is not the return of the Manifestation, but that of the perfections. In the Gospel it says that John, the son of Zacharias, is Elias. These words do not mean the return of the rational soul and personality of Elias in the body of John, but rather that the perfections and qualities of Elias were manifested and appeared in John.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 288

### **Bahá’u’lláh Was Considered To Be ‘Peerless In Personality’**

7. The Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh are many. The precepts and teachings they contain are universal, covering every subject. He has revealed scientific explanations ranging throughout all the realms of human inquiry and investigation--astronomy, biology, medical science, etc. In the Kitáb-i-Íqán He has given expositions of the meanings of the Gospel and other heavenly Books. He wrote lengthy Tablets upon civilization, sociology and government. Every subject is considered. His Tablets are matchless in beauty and profundity. Even His enemies acknowledge the greatness of Bahá’u’lláh, saying He was the miracle of humanity. This was their confession although they did not believe in Him. He was eulogized by Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Muslims who denied His claim. They frequently said, “He is matchless, unique.” A Christian poet in the Orient wrote, “Do not believe him a manifestation of God, yet his miracles are as great as the sun.” Mirza Abu’l-Fadl has mentioned many poems of this kind, and there are numerous others. The testimony of His enemies witnessed that He was the “miracle of mankind,” that He “walked in a special pathway of knowledge” and was “peerless in personality.” His teachings are universal and the standard for human action. They are not merely theoretical and intended to remain in books. They are the principles of action. Results follow action. Mere theory is fruitless. Of what use is a book upon medicine if it is never taken from the library shelf? When practical activity has been manifested, the teachings of God have borne fruit.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 155

8. When Bahá’u’lláh appeared in Persia, all the contemporaneous religious sects and systems rose against Him. His enemies were kings. The enemies of Christ were the Jews, the Pharisees; but the enemies of Bahá’u’lláh were rulers who could command armies and bring hundreds of thousands of soldiers into the arena of operation. These kings represented some fifty million people, all of whom under their influence and domination were opposed to Bahá’u’lláh. Therefore, in effect Bahá’u’lláh, singly and alone, virtually withstood fifty million enemies. Yet these great numbers, instead of being able to dominate Him, could not withstand His wonderful personality and the power and influence of His heavenly Cause. Although they were determined upon extinguishing the light in that most brilliant lantern, they were ultimately defeated and overthrown, and day by day His splendor became more radiant. They made every effort to lessen His greatness, but His prestige and renown grew in proportion to their endeavors to diminish it. Surrounded by enemies who were seeking His life, He never sought to conceal Himself, did nothing to protect Himself; on the contrary, in His spiritual might and power He was at all times visible before the faces of men, easy of access, serenely withstanding the multitudes who were opposing Him. At last His banner was upraised.

9.

### **The Virtues And Perfections Of The Manifestations Are More Important Than Personality**

10. Likewise, the divine religions of the holy Manifestations of God are in reality one, though in name and nomenclature they differ. Man must be a lover of the light, no matter from what dayspring it may appear. He must be a lover of the rose, no matter in what soil it may be growing. He must be a seeker of the truth, no matter from what source it come. Attachment to the lantern is not loving the light. Attachment to the earth is not befitting, but enjoyment of the rose which develops from the soil is worthy. Devotion to the tree is profitless, but partaking of the fruit is beneficial. Luscious fruits, no matter upon what tree they grow or where they may be found, must be enjoyed. The word of truth, no matter which tongue utters it, must be sanctioned. Absolute verities, no matter in what book they be recorded, must be accepted. If we harbor prejudice, it will be the cause of deprivation and ignorance. The strife between religions, nations and races arises from misunderstanding. If we investigate the religions to discover the principles underlying their foundations, we will find they agree; for the fundamental reality of them is one and not multiple. By this means the religionists of the world will reach their point of unity and reconciliation. They will ascertain the truth that the purpose of religion is the acquisition of praiseworthy virtues, the betterment of morals, the spiritual development of mankind, the real life and divine bestowals. All the Prophets have been the promoters of these principles; none of Them has been the promoter of corruption, vice or evil. They have summoned mankind to all good. They have united people in the love of God, invited them to the religions of the unity of mankind and exhorted them to amity and agreement. For example, we mention Abraham and Moses. By this mention we do not mean the limitation implied in the mere names but intend the virtues which these names embody. When we say Abraham, we mean thereby a manifestation of divine guidance, a center of human virtues, a source of heavenly bestowals to mankind, a dawning point of divine inspiration and perfections. These perfections and graces are not limited to names and boundaries. When we find these virtues, qualities and attributes in any personality, we recognize the same reality shining from within and bow in acknowledgment of the Abrahamic perfections. Similarly, we acknowledge and adore the beauty of Moses. Some souls were lovers of the name Abraham, loving the lantern instead of the light, and when they saw this same light shining from another lantern, they were so attached to the former lantern that they did not recognize its later appearance and illumination. Therefore, those who were attached and held tenaciously to the name Abraham were deprived when the Abrahamic virtues reappeared in Moses. Similarly, the Jews were believers in Moses, awaiting the coming of the Messiah. The virtues and perfections of Moses became apparent in Jesus Christ most effulgently, but the Jews held to the name Moses, not adoring the virtues and perfections manifest in Him. Had they been adoring these virtues and seeking these perfections, they would assuredly have believed in Jesus Christ when the same virtues and perfections shone in Him. If we are lovers of the light, we adore it in whatever lamp it may become manifest, but if we love the lamp itself and the light is transferred to another lamp, we will neither accept nor sanction it. Therefore, we must follow and adore the virtues revealed in the Messengers of God--whether in Abraham, Moses, Jesus or other Prophets--but we must not adhere to and adore the lamp. We must recognize the sun, no matter from what dawning point it may shine forth, be it Mosaic, Abrahamic or any personal point of orientation whatever, for we are lovers of sunlight and not of orientation. We are lovers

of illumination and not of lamps and candles. We are seekers for water, no matter from what rock it may gush forth. We are in need of fruit in whatsoever orchard it may be ripened. We long for rain; it matters not which cloud pours it down. We must not be fettered. If we renounce these fetters, we shall agree, for all are seekers of reality. The counterfeit or imitation of true religion has adulterated human belief, and the foundations have been lost sight of. The variance of these imitations has produced enmity and strife, war and bloodshed. Now the glorious and brilliant twentieth century has dawned, and the divine bounty is radiating universally. The Sun of Truth is shining forth in intense enkindlement. This is, verily, the century when these imitations must be forsaken, superstitions abandoned and God alone worshiped. We must look at the reality of the Prophets and Their teachings in order that we may agree.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 151-153

### **Souls Receive Grace From The Bounty Of The Holy Spirit, Not From The Personality Of The Manifestation**

11. It is evident that the souls receive grace from the bounty of the Holy Spirit which appears in the Manifestations of God, and not from the personality of the Manifestation. Therefore, if a soul does not receive grace from the bounties of the Holy Spirit, he remains deprived of the divine gift, and the banishment itself puts the soul beyond the reach of pardon.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 128

### **‘Abdu’l-Bahá Had A Magnetic, Impressive Personality**

12. Dominating the entire range of this fascinating spectacle towers the incomparable figure of Bahá’u’lláh, transcendental in His majesty, serene, awe-inspiring, unapproachably glorious. Allied, though subordinate in rank, and invested with the authority of presiding with Him over the destinies of this supreme Dispensation, there shines upon this mental picture the youthful glory of the Báb, infinite in His tenderness, irresistible in His charm, unsurpassed in His heroism, matchless in the dramatic circumstances of His short yet eventful life. And finally there emerges, though on a plane of its own and in a category entirely apart from the one occupied by the twin Figures that preceded Him, the vibrant, the magnetic personality of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, reflecting to a degree that no man, however exalted his station, can hope to rival, the glory and power with which They who are the Manifestations of God are alone endowed.

Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 97-98

13. “When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá visited this country for the first time in 1912,” a commentator on His American travels has written, “He found a large and sympathetic audience waiting to greet Him personally and to receive from His own lips His loving and spiritual message. ...Beyond the words spoken there was something indescribable in His personality that impressed profoundly all who came into His presence. The dome-like head, the patriarchal beard, the eyes that seemed to have looked beyond the reach of time and sense, the soft yet clearly penetrating voice, the translucent humility, the never failing love,--but above all, the sense of power mingled with gentleness that invested His whole being with a rare majesty of spiritual exaltation that both set Him apart, and yet that brought Him near to the lowliest soul,--it was all this, and much more that can never be defined, that have left with His many ... friends, memories that are ineffaceable and unspeakably precious.”

14. Great have been the blessings, and divers the bestowals, vouchsafed to this Community ever since the compelling will of a loving Master called it into being, and raised it up for the glory and honor of His Father's Faith. Unnumbered have been the marks of solicitude which, down the years, He showered upon it, as He nursed it in its infancy, as He fostered its growth, as He sent forth His messengers and communicated His written instructions to initiate it into the mysteries of His Cause, as He vitalized it through personal contact with His own dynamic and vibrant personality, as He consecrated, through a series of significant acts, the initial activities which He Himself had enabled it to inaugurate, as He invested it, at a later stage, in the evening of His life, with that primacy that was to empower it to launch the Plan which He had conceived for its future development, as He, through the sustaining power of His spirit from on high, assisted it to erect the framework of those institutions that were to safeguard its unfoldment and canalize its energies, as He led it forward to embark upon the first stage of His own revealed Plan which was to enable it to achieve such exploits and garner such a harvest in the virgin territories of the New World, and as He, with that same watchful and loving care, is now marshalling its forces and sounding the signal for a still greater and more brilliant deployment of those forces, at a time of great commotion and distress, in one of the most agitated storm centers of the world.

Shoghi Effendi: *Messages to America*, pp. 102-103

15. It would take me too long to attempt even a brief description of the first stirrings which the introduction of the Bahá'í Revelation into the New World, as conceived, initiated and directed by our beloved Master, immediately created. Nor does space permit me to narrate the circumstances attending the epoch-making visit of the first American pilgrims to Bahá'u'lláh's hallowed shrine, to relate the deeds which signalized the return of these bearers of a new-born Gospel to their native country, or to assess the immediate consequences of their achievements. No word of mine would suffice to express how instantly the revelation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's hopes, expectations and purpose for an awakened continent, electrified the minds and hearts of those who were privileged to hear Him, who were made the recipients of His inestimable blessings and the chosen repositories of His confidence and trust. I can never hope to interpret adequately the feelings that surged within those heroic hearts as they sat at their Master's feet, beneath the shelter of His prison-house, eager to absorb and intent to preserve the effusions of His divine Wisdom. I can never pay sufficient tribute to that spirit of unyielding determination which the impact of a magnetic personality and the spell of a mighty utterance kindled in the entire company of these returning pilgrims, these consecrated heralds of the Covenant of God, at so decisive an epoch of their history. The memory of such names as Lua, Chase, MacNutt, Dealy, Goodall, Dodge, Farmer and Brittingham--to mention only a few of that immortal galaxy now gathered to the glory of Bahá'u'lláh--will for ever remain associated with the rise and establishment of His Faith in the American continent, and will continue to shed on its annals a lustre that time can never dim.

Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 81

### **Bahíyyih Khánum Was A Continual Reminder Of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Inspiring Personality**

16. Which of the blessings am I to recount, which in her unfailing solicitude she showered upon me, in the most critical and agitated hours of my life? To me, standing in so dire a need of the

vitalizing grace of God, she was the living symbol of many an attribute I had learned to admire in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. She was to me a continual reminder of His inspiring personality, of His calm resignation, of His munificence and magnanimity. To me she was an incarnation of His winsome graciousness, of His all-encompassing tenderness and love.

Shoghi Effendi: *Bahíyyih Khánnum*, p. 42; *Bahá’í Administration*, p. 194

### **Queen Marie of Rumania Possessed A Charming And Radiant Personality**

17. Eldest daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh, who was the second son of that Queen to whom Bahá’u’lláh had, in a significant Tablet, addressed words of commendation; granddaughter of Czar Alexander II to whom an Epistle had been revealed by that same Pen; related by both birth and marriage to Europe’s most prominent families; born in the Anglican Faith; closely associated through her marriage with the Greek Orthodox Church, the state religion of her adopted country; herself an accomplished authoress; possessed of a charming and radiant personality; highly talented, clear-visioned, daring and ardent by nature; keenly devoted to all enterprises of a humanitarian character, she, alone among her sister-queens, alone among all those of royal birth or station, was moved to spontaneously acclaim the greatness of the Message of Bahá’u’lláh, to proclaim His Fatherhood, as well as the Prophethood of Muhammad, to commend the Bahá’í teachings to all men and women, and to extol their potency, sublimity and beauty.

Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, pp. 389-390

### **Self-control Has An Effect On Character And Personality**

18. The Bahá’í youth should...be taught the lesson of self-control which, when exercised, undoubtedly has a salutary effect on the development of character and of personality....

Shoghi Effendi: *A Chaste and Holy Life*, p. 56

### **Seek Truth No Matter What One’s Personality**

19. We must adore the sun itself and not merely the place of its appearance. In the same way men of enlightened heart worship truth on whatever horizon it appears. They are not bound by personality, but they follow the truth, and are able to recognize it no matter from whence it may come. It is this same truth which helps humanity to progress, which gives life to all created beings, for it is the Tree of Life!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 128

20. It means, also, that we must be willing to clear away all that we have previously learned, all that would clog our steps on the way to truth; we must not shrink if necessary from beginning our education all over again. We must not allow our love for any one religion or any one personality to so blind our eyes that we become fettered by superstition! When we are freed from all these bonds, seeking with liberated minds, then shall we be able to arrive at our goal.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 137

### **Do Not Cling To The Promptings Of Your Nature; Obey The Statutes Of God**

21. “Say: O concourse of monks! Seclude not yourselves in your churches and cloisters. Come ye out of them by My leave, and busy, then, yourselves with what will profit you and others. Thus commandeth you He Who is the Lord of the Day of Reckoning. Seclude yourselves in the stronghold of My love. This, truly, is the seclusion that befitteth you, could ye but know it. He that secludeth himself in his house is indeed as one dead. It behooveth man to show forth that which will benefit mankind. He that bringeth forth no fruit is fit for the fire. Thus admonisheth you your Lord; He, verily, is the Mighty, the Bountiful. Enter ye into wedlock, that after you another may arise in your stead. We, verily, have forbidden you lechery, and not that which is conducive to fidelity. Have ye clung unto the promptings of your nature, and cast behind your backs the statutes of God? Fear ye God, and be not of the foolish. But for man, who, on My earth, would remember Me, and how could My attributes and My names be revealed? Reflect, and be not of them that have shut themselves out as by a veil from Him, and were of those that are fast asleep. He that married not (Jesus Christ) could find no place wherein to abide, nor where to lay His head, by reason of what the hands of the treacherous had wrought. His holiness consisted not in the things ye have believed and imagined, but rather in the things which belong unto Us. Ask, that ye may be made aware of His station which hath been exalted above the vain imaginings of all the peoples of the earth. Blessed are they that understand.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 49-50

22. Does not the history of primitive Christianity and of the rise of Islam, each in its own way, offer a striking parallel to this strange phenomenon the beginnings of which we are now witnessing in this, the first century of the Bahá'í Era? Has not the Divine Impulse which gave birth to each of these great religious systems been driven, through the operation of those forces which the irresistible growth of the Faith itself had released, to seek away from the land of its birth and in more propitious climes a ready field and a more adequate medium for the incarnation of its spirit and the propagation of its cause? Have not the Asiatic churches of Jerusalem, of Antioch and of Alexandria, consisting chiefly of those Jewish converts, whose character and temperament inclined them to sympathize with the traditional ceremonies of the Mosaic Dispensation, been forced as they steadily declined to recognize the growing ascendancy of their Greek and Roman brethren? Have they not been compelled to acknowledge the superior valor and the trained efficiency which have enabled these standard-bearers of the Cause of Jesus Christ to erect the symbols of His world-wide dominion on the ruins of a collapsing Empire? Has not the animating spirit of Islam been constrained, under the pressure of similar circumstances, to abandon the inhospitable wastes of its Arabian Home, the theatre of its greatest sufferings and exploits, to yield in a distant land the fairest fruit of its slowly maturing civilization?

Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 74

### **The Word Of God Is A Binding Force That Can Unite Conflicts Creeds And Temperaments**

23. Such is the binding force of the Word of God, which uniteth the hearts of them that have renounced all else but Him, who have believed in His signs, and quaffed from the Hand of glory the Kawthar of God's holy grace. Furthermore, how numerous are those peoples of divers beliefs, of conflicting creeds, and opposing temperaments, who, through the reviving fragrance of the Divine springtime, breathing from the Ridvan of God, have been arrayed with the new robe of divine Unity, and have drunk from the cup of His singleness!

### **Bahá'ís Must Learn To Forget Personalities During Consultation**

24. The Bahá'ís must learn to forget personalities and to overcome the desire--so natural in people--to take sides and fight about it. They must also learn to really make use of the great principle of consultation. There is a time set aside at the 19 Day Feasts for the Community to express its views and make suggestions to its Assembly; the Assembly and the believers should look forward to this happy period of discussion, and neither fear it nor suppress it. Likewise the Assembly members should fully consult, and in their decisions put the interests of the Cause first and not personalities, the will of the majority prevailing.

Shoghi Effendi: *Light of Divine Guidance* Vol.1, p. 152

### **Consider The Differences Among People When Teaching The Faith**

25. Shoghi Effendi feels that he can lay down no rule as to when one should introduce the names of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá in one's teaching. Much depends on the temperament and aptitude both of the teacher and the one taught....

We must look to the example of the Master and follow our "Inner Light", adapting our message as best we can to the capacity and "ripeness" of the one we are seeking to teach....

Man's spiritual digestive powers have similar laws to those that govern physical digestion. When people are spiritually hungry and thirsty they must be given wholesome and suitable spiritual food, but if we give too much at a time or too rich food for the digestive powers, it only causes nausea and rejection or malassimilation.

Shoghi Effendi: *Guidelines for Teaching*, p. 306

26. Nor should any of the pioneers, at this early stage in the upbuilding of Bahá'í national communities, overlook the fundamental prerequisite for any successful teaching enterprise, which is to adapt the presentation of the fundamental principles of their Faith to the cultural and religious backgrounds, the ideologies, and the temperament of the divers races and nations whom they are called upon to enlighten and attract. The susceptibilities of these races and nations, from both the northern and southern climes, springing from either the Germanic or Latin stock, belonging to either the Catholic or Protestant communion, some democratic, others totalitarian in outlook, some socialistic, others capitalistic in their tendencies, differing widely in their customs and standards of living, should at all times be carefully considered, and under no circumstances neglected.

Shoghi Effendi: *Citadel of Faith*, p. 25

27. As so much will depend upon the nature and general presentation of the theme, rather than upon the personality of the reader or speaker, I feel that, first and foremost, our attention should be concentrated on the choice and thorough preparation of the subject matter as well as on the proper drafting and the form of the paper itself, which might possibly have to be submitted afterwards to the authorities of the conference.

Shoghi Effendi: *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 58

28. As to the policy that should be adopted with regard to these Conferences and other Bahá'í activities in general, it appears increasingly evident that as the Movement grows in strength and power the National Spiritual Assemblies should be encouraged, if circumstances permit and the means at their disposal justify, to resort to the twofold method of directly and indirectly winning the enlightened public to the unqualified acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith. The one method would assume an open, decisive and challenging tone. The other, without implying in any manner the slightest departure from strict loyalty to the Cause of God, would be progressive and cautious. Experience will reveal the fact that each of the methods in its own special way might suit a particular temperament and class of people, and that each in the present state of a constantly fluctuating society, should be judiciously attempted and utilized.

Shoghi Effendi: *Bahá'í Administration*, pp. 124-125

### **Draw Upon Hidden Springs Of Celestial Strength, Not Upon Force Of Human Personality**

29. That the Cause associated with the name of Bahá'u'lláh feeds itself upon those hidden springs of celestial strength which no force of human personality, whatever its glamour, can replace; that its reliance is solely upon that mystic Source with which no worldly advantage, be it wealth, fame, or learning can compare; that it propagates itself by ways mysterious and utterly at variance with the standards accepted by the generality of mankind, will, if not already apparent, become increasingly manifest as it forges ahead towards fresh conquests in its struggle for the spiritual regeneration of mankind.

Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 51-52

### **Consider One's Own Personality When Presenting The Message**

30. In teaching the Cause, much depends on the personality of the teacher and on the method he chooses for presenting the message. Different personalities and different classes and types of individuals need different methods of approach. And it is the sign of an able teacher to know how to best adapt his methods to various types of people whom he happens to meet. There is no one method one can follow all through. But there should be as many ways of approach as there are types of individual seekers. Flexibility and variety of method is, therefore, an essential prerequisite for the success of every teaching activity.

Shoghi Effendi: *Guidelines for Teaching*, p. 308

### **Do Not Allow Own Aptitudes and Capacities to Limit One's Efforts**

31. Day and night I entreat and supplicate to the Kingdom of God and beg for you infinite assistance and confirmation. Do not take into consideration your own aptitudes and capacities, but fix your gaze on the consummate bounty, the divine bestowal and the power of the Holy Spirit--the power that converteth the drop into a sea and the star into a sun.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Selections ... 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 104

### **Thorough Preparation Of The Subject Matter For Teaching Is Also Important**

32. As so much will depend upon the nature and general presentation of the theme, rather than upon the personality of the reader or speaker, I feel that first and foremost our attention should

be concentrated on the choice and thorough preparation of the subject matter as well as on the proper drafting and the form of the paper itself, which might possibly have to be submitted afterwards to the authorities of the conference.

I feel the necessity of entrusting this highly important and delicate task to a special committee, to be appointed most carefully by the National Spiritual Assembly of America, and consisting of those who by their knowledge of the Cause, their experience in matters of publicity, and particularly by their power of expression and beauty of style will be qualified to produce a befitting statement on the unique history of the Movement as well as its lofty principles.

Shoghi Effendi: *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 21

### **Carefully Consider Personality Of Bahá'í Chosen To Teach People Of Prominence**

33. The personality of the Bahá'í who accepts this invitation should be carefully considered, because to be a guest of people in a different climate and environment, of a different nationality and speaking a different language, so far away, might be a little trying, and of course the impression that this Bahá'í creates will be of infinite importance to the Faith in its future development in Greenland. Whether ... makes the sacrifice and goes, or some other individual is chosen, he urges your Assembly to above all consider this matter tactfully and from the human standpoint, rather than the religious one, if one can put it that way.

Shoghi Effendi: *Messages to Canada*, p. 28

### **No Limitations Of Personality And Temperament Are Placed On Believers When Choosing Members For Administrative Institutions**

34. I greatly value your suggestions, but I do not feel it to be in keeping with the spirit of the Cause to impose any limitation upon the freedom of the believers to choose those of any race, nationality or temperament who best combine the essential qualifications for membership of administrative institutions. They should disregard personalities and concentrate their attention on the qualities and requirements of office, without prejudice, passion or partiality. The Assembly should be representative of the choicest and most varied and capable elements in every Bahá'í community....

Shoghi Effendi: *Bahá'í Election*, p. 317

### **The Cause Must Not Be Allowed To Center Around Any Bahá'í Personality**

35. "Regarding the principle that the Cause must not be allowed to center around any Bahá'í personality, the Guardian wishes to make it clear that it was never intended that well qualified individual teachers should not receive from local Assemblies every encouragement and facilities to address the public. What the Guardian meant was that the personality and popularity of such a speaker should never be allowed to eclipse the authority or detract from the influence of the body of the elected representatives in every local community. Such an individual should not only seek the approval, advice and assistance of the body that represents the Cause in his locality, but should strive to attribute any credit he may obtain, to the collective wisdom and capacity of the Assembly under whose jurisdiction he performs his services. Assemblies and not individuals constitute the bedrock on which the Administration is built. Everything else must be

subordinated to, and be made to serve and advance the best interests of these elected custodians and promoters of the laws of Bahá'u'lláh.”

Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 71

36. We should respect the National Spiritual Assembly and the Local Spiritual Assembly because they are institutions founded by Bahá'u'lláh. It has nothing to do with personality, but is far above it. It will be a great day when the friends, on and off the Assemblies, come to fully grasp the fact that it is not the individuals on an Assembly which is important, but the Assembly as an institution.

Shoghi Effendi: *National Spiritual Assembly*, p. 96

Source: Huitt, W. (2005). *Becoming a Brilliant Star: Style, temperament and personality*. Valdosta, GA. Available online:  
<http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/religion/bahai/brilstar/04style.pdf>

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