

Principles of Governance

The Rulers

The Secret of Divine Civilization

Bahá'í Administration 8

The Secret of Divine Civilization

Bahá'u'lláh asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1875 as a young man of 31 to write a book, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, about becoming a modern nation, to inspire Persia to abandon its corrupt ways. Addressed to the rulers and people of Persia, it makes no direct mention of the Bahá'í Faith and was published anonymously so that it would not be rejected by its target audience.

The Secret of Divine Civilization

It is a model of the application of spiritual principles to the practical problems of the world. One theme of special interest here is its definition of the qualities of the rulers and learned of the world, those who govern and those who aspire to lead through knowledge.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá
in Adrianople



Qualities and Responsibilities of Rulers

Just kings are protectors of the people and dispensers of Divine justice, powerful champions of the people's rights. These give no thought to amassing enormous fortunes for themselves; their own wealth lies in enriching their subjects so each individual citizen has affluence and ease. They take no pride in gold and silver, but rather in their enlightenment and their determination to achieve the universal good.

(Abdu'l-Bahá (1875), [The Secret of Divine Civilization](#), p. 20-21)

Qualities and Responsibilities of Rulers

Ministers of state and representatives, who place the will of God above their own, and whose administrative skill and wisdom in the conduct of their office raises the science of government to new heights of perfection. They are lamps of knowledge; their thinking, their attitudes and their acts demonstrate their patriotism and their concern for the country's advancement.

Qualities and Responsibilities of Rulers

Content with a modest stipend, they consecrate their days and nights to the execution of important duties and the devising of methods to insure the progress of the people. Through the effectiveness of their wise counsel, the soundness of their judgment, they cause their government to become an example to be followed by all the governments of the world.

(Abdu'l-Bahá (1875), [The Secret of Divine Civilization](#), p. 20-21)

Ruling with Justice



Qualities and Responsibilities of Rulers

...the political world... cannot instantaneously evolve from the nadir of defectiveness to the zenith of rightness and perfection. Rather, qualified individuals must strive by day and by night, using all those means which will conduce to progress, until the government and the people develop along every line from day to day and even from moment to moment.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá (1875), [The Secret of Divine Civilization](#), p. 107-108)

Qualities and Responsibilities of Rulers

...when the pure intentions and the justice of the ruler, the wisdom and consummate skill and statecraft of the governing authorities, and the determination and unstinted efforts of the people, are all combined; then day by day the effects of the advancement, of the far-reaching reforms, of the pride and prosperity of government and people alike, will become clearly manifest.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá (1875), [The Secret of Divine Civilization](#), p. 107-108)

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