

# *THE PROSPERITY OF HUMANKIND*

Bahá'í International Community

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Part III – Redefining human relationships

in simplified language

Prosperity of Humankind - 4

# Redefining human relationships

For the human rights now being agreed by the community of nations to become international requirements, we need to redefine human relationships. Our present concepts of what is natural and appropriate in relationships -- among human beings themselves, between human beings and nature, between the individual and society, and between the members of society and its institutions -- reflect an understanding from earlier and less mature stages in our development.

# Redefining human relationships

If humanity is indeed coming of age, if all the inhabitants of the planet are a single people, if justice is to be the ruling principle of social organisation -- then existing concepts from when we were ignorant of these emerging realities have to be changed.

# New understandings

Movement in this direction has barely begun. It will lead to a new understanding of the family and its members' rights and responsibilities. It will transform the role of women at every level of society. People will have a new understanding of work and the place of economic activity in their lives.

# New understandings

There will be big changes in the governance of human affairs and its institutions. The work of society's non-governmental organisations will be rationalised. Binding legislation will protect both the environment and the development needs of all peoples. The United Nations system will be transformed into a world federation of nations with its own legislative, judicial, and executive bodies.

# Consultation

Central to redesigning the system of human relationships is the process that Bahá'u'lláh refers to as consultation.

*"In all things it is necessary to consult,"* is His advice.

*"The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation."*

# Truth through consultation

Seeking truth through consultation goes far beyond the kind of negotiation and compromise that we see in present discussions of human affairs. It cannot be achieved with the culture of protest that we see in present society. Debate, propaganda, seeing others as adversaries, taking sides and partisanship so common in collective action all harm its purpose: to arrive at a consensus about the truth of a given situation, the options and the wisest choice of action at that moment.

# Consultation

Bahá'u'lláh calls for a process of consultation in which the individual participants rise above their personal points of view, to become members of a body with its own interests and goals. In an atmosphere of honesty and courtesy, ideas belong not to the individual to whom they occur but to the group as a whole, to take up, discard, or revise to best serve the goal of the group. Consultation succeeds when all participants support the decisions taken, regardless of their opinions before the discussion. This way a decision can be readily reconsidered if experience shows any problems.



# Consultation

Bahá'í Conference  
on Social and  
Economic  
Development  
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# Justice through consultation

This way, consultation is the working expression of justice in human affairs. To ensure success, it must be a basic feature of any strategy of social and economic development. Indeed, the people on whose commitment and efforts the success of such a strategy depends will only participate if consultation is made the organising principle of every project. *"No man can attain his true station",* is Bahá'u'lláh's counsel, *"except through his justice. No power can exist except through unity. No welfare and no well-being can be attained except through consultation."*



Consultation, Talanoa Dialogue, UNFCCC, Bonn 2018