Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The question of economics must commence with the farmer and then be extended to the other classes inasmuch as the number of farmers is far greater than all other classes. Therefore, it is fitting to begin with the farmer in matters related to economics for the farmer is the first active agent in human society. In brief, from among the wise men in every village a board should be set up and the affairs of that village should be under the control of that board. Likewise a general storehouse should be founded with the appointment of a secretary. At the time of the harvest, under the direction of that board, a certain percentage of the entire harvest should be appropriated for the storehouse.

The storehouse has seven revenues: Tithes, taxes on animals, property without an heir, all lost objects found whose owners cannot be traced, one third of all treasure-trove, one third of the produce of all mines, and voluntary contributions.

This storehouse also has seven expenditures:

1. General running expenses of the storehouse, such as the salary of the secretary and the administration of public health.
2. Tithes to the government.
3. Taxes on animals to the government.
4. Costs of running an orphanage.
5. Costs of running a home for the incapacitated.
6. Costs of running a school.
7. Payment of subsidies to provide needed support of the poor.

The first revenue is the tithe. It should be collected as follows: If, for instance, the income of a person is five hundred dollars and his necessary expenses are the same, no tithes will be collected from him. If another’s expenses are five hundred dollars while his income is one thousand dollars, one tenth will be taken from him, for he hath more than his needs; if he giveth one tenth of the surplus, his livelihood will not be adversely affected. If another’s expenses are one thousand dollars, and his income is five thousand dollars, as he hath four thousand dollars surplus he will be required to give one and a half tenths. If another person hath necessary expenses of one thousand dollars, but his income is ten thousand dollars, from him two tenths will be required for his surplus represents a large sum. But if the necessary expenses of another person are four or five thousand dollars, and his income one hundred thousand, one fourth will be required from him. On the other hand, should a person’s income be two hundred, but his needs absolutely essential for his livelihood be five hundred dollars, and provided he hath not been remiss in his work or his farm hath not been blessed with a harvest, such a one must receive help from the general storehouse so that he may not remain in need and may live in comfort.

A certain amount must be put aside from the general storehouse for the orphans of the village and a certain sum for the incapacitated. A certain amount must be provided from this storehouse for those who are needy and incapable of earning a livelihood, and a certain amount for the village’s system of education. And, a certain amount must be set aside for the administration of public health. If anything is left in the storehouse, that must be transferred to the general treasury of the nation for national expenditures.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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