

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

I beg of God that He will enable His handmaids to attain the fruits of worship in every aspect of life; that they may day by day go forward and make conspicuous progress in every material and spiritual degree, and that in every phase of the human condition, whether physical or spiritual, they may become personifications of abiding blessedness and joy.

Verily, the magnet that draweth unto itself such bounty is none other than education of the child. If the mothers, as it behoveth them, shall provide their children, from infancy on, with a thorough training in the things of God and of the spirit, and rear them to be materially educated as well, this fostering care is a service rendered unto the Holy Threshold, and is truly accounted as worship.

The child must, from the day of his birth, be provided with whatever is conducive to his health; and know ye this: so far as possible, the mother’s milk is best for, more agreeable and better suited to the child, unless she should fall ill or her milk should run entirely dry. And once the infant beginneth to experience feelings and comprehension in some slight degree, let the mother lay the foundations of his conduct and training, and speak to him of all sorts of matters so that he may learn discipline and good behaviour while yet a small child, and seek to have spiritual emotions, and so far as he is able, to comprehend the mysteries of religion and become informed in a general way as to all material things.

When it cometh time for a schoolteacher, his education in the various branches of knowledge devolveth upon his instructor at school and upon his father and mother at home. This matter is of the most vital importance; certainly, certainly, ye will pay it due consideration, that expertness may be obtained.

Unless the child, in his earliest years, be carefully tended, whether in a material or a spiritual sense, whether as to his physical health or his education, it will prove extremely difficult to effect any changes later on. For example, if a child is not properly cared for at the beginning of life, so that he doth not develop a sound body and his constitution doth not flourish as it ought, his body will remain feeble, and whatever is done afterward will take little effect. This matter of protecting the health of the child is essential, for sound health leadeth to the strengthening of insight and sense perception, and then the child, as he learneth sciences, arts, skills, and the civilities of life, will duly develop his powers....

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá