

16-Agency & Volition

Existence is realized and possible through the bounty of God, just as the ray or flame emanating from this lamp is realized through the bounty of the lamp, from which it originates. Even so, all phenomena are realized through the divine bounty, and the explanation of true pantheistic statement and principle is that the phenomena of the universe find realization through the one power animating and dominating all things, and all things are but manifestations of its energy and bounty. The virtue of being and existence is through no other agency.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, 96.5

And now consider this infinite universe. Is it possible that it could have been created without a Creator? Or that the Creator and cause of this infinite congeries of worlds should be without intelligence? Is the idea tenable that the Creator has no comprehension of what is manifested in creation? Man, the creature, has volition and certain virtues. Is it possible that his Creator is deprived of these? A child could not accept this belief and statement.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, 35.7

Praise and thanksgiving be unto Providence that out of all the realities in existence He has chosen the reality of man and has honored it with intellect and wisdom, the two most luminous lights in either world. Through the agency of this great endowment, He has in every epoch cast on the mirror of creation new and wonderful configurations.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, 1

God has created man lofty and noble, made him a dominant factor in creation. He has specialized man with supreme bestowals, conferred upon him mind, perception, memory, abstraction and the powers of the senses. These gifts of God to man were intended to make him the manifestation of divine virtues, a radiant light in the world of creation, a source of life and the agency of constructiveness in the infinite fields of existence.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, 110.2

Man is endowed with volition and memory; nature has neither. Man can seek out the mysteries latent in nature, whereas nature is not conscious of her own hidden phenomena. Man is progressive; nature is stationary, without the power of progression or retrogression. Man is endowed with ideal virtues— for example, intellection, volition, faith, confession and acknowledgment of God— while nature is devoid of all these.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, 20.5

By nature is meant those inherent properties and necessary relations derived from the realities of things. And these realities of things, though in the utmost diversity, are yet intimately connected one with the other. For these diverse realities an all-unifying agency is needed that shall link them all one to the other. For instance, the various organs and members, the parts and elements, that constitute the body of man, though at variance, are yet all connected one with the other by that all-unifying agency known as the human soul, that causeth them to function in perfect harmony and with absolute regularity, thus making the continuation of life possible.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í World Faith* (‘Abdu’l-Bahá section), 37.13

Unto each one hath been prescribed a preordained measure, as decreed in God’s mighty and guarded Tablets. All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify to this truth.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 77

Consider how these diverse parts and members of the human body are closely connected and harmoniously united one with the other. ..It is the mind that is the all-unifying agency that so uniteth all the component parts one with the other that each dischargeth its specific function in perfect order, and thereby cooperation and reaction are made possible. All parts function under certain laws that are essential to existence.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í World Faith* (‘Abdu’l-Bahá section), 37.22

It is through the power of the soul that the mind comprehendeth, imagineth and exerteth its influence, whilst the soul is a power that is free. The mind comprehendeth the abstract by the aid of the concrete, but the soul hath limitless manifestations of its own. The mind is circumscribed, the soul limitless. It is by the aid of such senses as those of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, that the mind comprehendeth, whereas the soul is free from all agencies.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablet to August Forel*, 6

Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker’s heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 267

The incomparable Creator hath created all men from one same substance, and hath exalted their reality above the rest of His creatures. Success or failure, gain or loss, must, therefore, depend upon man’s own exertions. The more he striveth, the greater will be his progress.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings*, pp. 81-82