

that are perceived by the mind and not by the senses.

Briefly, intelligible realities such as the praiseworthy attributes and perfections of man are purely good and have a positive existence. Evil is simply their non-existence. So ignorance is the want of knowledge, error is the want of guidance, forgetfulness is the want of remembrance, foolishness is the want of understanding: All these are nothing in themselves and have no positive existence.

As for sensible realities, these are also purely good, and evil is merely their non-existence; that is, blindness is the want of sight, deafness is the want of hearing, poverty is the want of wealth, illness is the want of health, death is the want of life, and weakness is the want of strength.

Now, a doubt comes to mind: Scorpions and snakes are poisonous—is this good or evil, for they have a positive existence? Yes, it is true that scorpions and snakes are evil, but only in relation to us and not to themselves, for their venom is their weapon and their sting their means of defence. But as the constituent elements of their venom are incompatible with those of our bodies—that is, as these constituent elements are mutually opposed—the venom is evil, or rather, those elements are evil in relation to each other, while in their own reality they are both good.



To summarize, one thing may be evil in relation to another but not evil within the limits of its own being. It follows therefore that there is no evil in existence: Whatsoever God has created, He has created good. Evil consists merely in non-existence. For example, death is the absence of life: When man is no longer sustained by the power of life, he dies. Darkness is the absence of light: When light is no more, darkness reigns. Light is a positively existing thing, but darkness has no positive existence; it is merely its absence. Likewise, wealth is a positively existing thing but poverty is merely its absence.



It is thus evident that all evil is mere non-existence. Good has a positive existence; evil is merely its absence.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Some Answered Questions, ch. 74

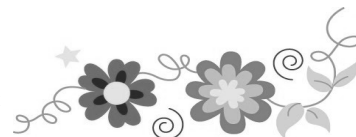
What is the Bahá'í Faith?

The Bahá'í Faith is the youngest of the world's independent religions. Its founder, Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892), is regarded by Bahá'ís as the most recent in the line of Messengers of God that stretches back beyond recorded time and that includes Abraham, Moses, Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster, Christ and Muhammad.

The central theme of Bahá'u'lláh's message is that humanity is one single race and that the day has come for its unification in one global society. God, Bahá'u'lláh said, has set in motion historical forces that are breaking down traditional barriers of race, class, creed, and nation and that will, in time, give birth to a universal civilization. The principal challenge facing the peoples of the earth is to accept the fact of their oneness and to assist the processes of unification.

One of the purposes of the Bahá'í Faith is to help make this possible. A worldwide community of some five million Bahá'ís, representative of most of the nations, races and cultures on earth, is working to give Bahá'u'lláh's teachings practical effect. Their experience will be a source of encouragement to all who share their vision of humanity as one global family and the earth as one homeland.

B a s i c



Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'u'lláh taught that there is one God whose successive revelations of His will to humanity have been the chief civilizing force in history. The agents of this process have been the Divine Messengers whom people have seen chiefly as the founders of separate religious systems but whose common purpose has been to bring the human race to spiritual and moral maturity.

Humanity is now coming of age. It is this that makes possible the unification of the human family and the building of a peaceful, global society. Among the principles which the Bahá'í Faith promotes as vital to the achievement of this goal are:

- the abandonment of all forms of prejudice
- full equality of opportunity for women and men
- recognition of the unity and relativity of religious truth
- the elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth
- adoption of an international auxiliary language
- the realization of universal education
- the responsibility of each person to independently search for truth
- the establishment of a global commonwealth of nations
- recognition that true religion is in harmony with reason and the pursuit of scientific knowledge

Prayer for Unity

O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God! Leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord.

~ Bahá'u'lláh

Prayer for Spiritual Growth

O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will no longer be sorrowful and grieved; I will be a happy and joyful being. O God! I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life. O God! Thou art more friend to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord.

~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá

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Bahá'í Faith

On Good and Evil

Know that created things are of two kinds: material and spiritual, sensible and intelligible. That is, some are perceptible to the senses, while others are only perceived by the mind.

Sensible realities are those which are perceived by the five outer senses: So, for example, those outward things which the eye sees are called sensible. Intelligible realities are those which have no outward existence but are perceived by the mind. For example, the mind itself is an intelligible reality and has no outward existence. Likewise, all human virtues and attributes have an intelligible rather than a sensible existence; that is, they are realities