

Story from Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Salt Lake City



(Picture Provided by Iqan Fadaei, Lake Blanche, UT)

Comment from Iqan Fadaei: Whenever I go into the mountains around Salt Lake City, I'm immediately reminded of the magnificence of its Creator, the humility we should show towards the earth as the source of life, and the need to focus our love on the whole world - not just one country, religion, or race: "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

The main website for the Baha'i Faith has a whole series of articles and statements related to the environment (<https://www.bahai.org/beliefs/god-his-creation/nature/articles-resources/>) but I've included some pertinent passages below.

- Every man of discernment, while walking upon the earth, feeleth indeed abashed, inasmuch as he is fully aware that the thing which is the source of his prosperity, his wealth, his might, his exaltation, his advancement and power is, as ordained by God, the very earth which is trodden beneath the feet of all men. There can be no doubt that whoever is cognizant of this truth, is cleansed and sanctified from all pride, arrogance, and vainglory.
- The principle of the oneness of humankind must become the ruling principle of international life. This principle....makes it possible to view the climate change challenge through a new lens – one that perceives humanity as a unified whole, not unlike the cells of the human body, infinitely differentiated in form and function yet united in a common purpose which exceeds that of its component parts.

Writings on the Earth and our relationship with it

Baha'u'llah, the Founder of the Baha'i Faith, has stated that:

- Whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that most great Light.... How resplendent the luminaries of knowledge that shine in an atom, and how vast the oceans of wisdom that surge within a drop.
- Every time I turn my gaze to Thine earth, I am made to recognize the evidences of Thy power and the tokens of Thy bounty. And when I behold the sea, I find that it speaketh to me of Thy majesty, and of the potency of Thy might, and of Thy sovereignty and Thy grandeur. And at what-ever time I contemplate the mountains, I am led to discover the ensigns of Thy victory and the standards of Thine omnipotence....I can hear from the whisper of the winds the sound of Thy glorification and praise, and can recognize in the murmur of the waters the voice that proclaimeth Thy virtues and Thine attributes, and can apprehend from the rustling of the leaves the mysteries that have been irrevocably ordained by Thee in Thy realm.

Abdu'l-Baha (the son of the Baha'u'llah and Leader of the Baha'i Faith upon Baha'u'llah's death) has stated that:

- Reflect upon the inner realities of the universe, the secret wisdoms involved, the enigmas, the inter-relationships, the rules that govern all. For every part of the universe is connected with every other part by ties that are very powerful and admit of no imbalance.
- Briefly, it is not only their fellow human beings that the beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature. For in all physical respects, and where the animal spirit is concerned, the selfsame feelings are shared by animal and man. Man hath not grasped this truth, however, and he believeth that physical sensations are confined to human beings, wherefore is he unjust to the animals, and cruel.
- Train your children from their earliest days to be infinitely tender and loving to animals. If an animal be sick, let the children try to heal it, if it be hungry, let them feed it, if thirsty, let them quench its thirst, if weary, let them see that it rests.
- He [man] is not in need of meat, nor is he obliged to eat it. Even without eating meat he would live with the utmost vigour and energy. Truly, the killing of animals and the eating of their meat is somewhat contrary to pity and compassion, and if one can content oneself with cereals, fruit, oil and nuts....it would undoubtedly be better and more pleasing.

Combating environmental challenges:

The need to combat environmental challenges and work for a more sustainable and respectful relationship with the earth is closely linked to the issues of economic and social justice. It can only be achieved within the broader challenge of realizing unity among the world's peoples. The Baha'i International Community (which acts as the permanent representative of the Baha'i Faith to the United Nations) has stated:

- The principle of the oneness of humankind must become the ruling principle of international life. This principle does not seek to undermine national autonomy or suppress cultural or intellectual diversity. Rather, it makes it possible to view the climate change challenge through a new lens – one that perceives humanity as a unified whole, not unlike the cells of the human body, infinitely differentiated in form and function yet united in a common purpose which exceeds that of its component parts. This principle constitutes more than a call for cooperation; it seeks to remold anachronistic and unjust patterns of human interaction in a manner that reflects the relationships that bind us as members of one human race....In order to progress beyond a world community

driven by a largely economic and utilitarian calculus, to one of shared responsibility for the prosperity of all nations, such a principle must take root in the conscience of the individual. In this way, we come to recognize the broader human agenda – which subsumes those of climate change, poverty eradication, gender equality, development, and the like – and seeks to use both human and natural resources in a way that facilitates the progress and well-being of all people.