

**The
Bahá'í Fund**

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‘Abdu’l-Bahá has said:

“The mystery of sacrifice is that man should sacrifice all his conditions for the divine station of God. The station of God is mercy, kindness, forgiveness, sacrifice, favor, grace and giving life to the spirits and lighting the fire of His love in the hearts and arteries.”

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“If no one ever tells us how much to contribute to the Fund,” we may ask ourselves, “then how are we to know what is expected of us? How can we decide whether God is pleased with the way we are contributing to His Cause?” The answer to these questions lies in one phrase: the mystery of sacrifice. In the Bahá’í Faith a single coin contributed by a believer of little means can be as precious as a large sum contributed by a wealthy believer; what determines the worth of the contribution is the sacrifice with which it is made. Of course, no one can judge the degree of the sacrifice of another. Each of us must reflect in our own heart on the nature of sacrifice when determining how much to contribute to the Fund.

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The civilization we Bahá’ís are trying to build will be a prosperous one, both materially and spiritually. Wealth is acceptable only if certain conditions are met. We should acquire it through honest work. We should spend it for the good of humanity. And the entire community should be uplifted; it is not acceptable for a few to be extremely rich while the majority are in want of the bare necessities of life.

To build a society that is free from injustice and misery, we must all be generous and giving. No matter how poor we are, we should still contribute something for the progress of humanity, for true prosperity can only be achieved through giving. Generosity is a quality of the human soul and has nothing to do with whether we are poor or wealthy. In the Hidden Words, Bahá’u’lláh says:

“To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.”

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We should remember that the real source of whatever wealth we may possess is God, the All-Bountiful. He provides us with our means of existence; He makes it possible for us to progress, and when we contribute to the Fund, we are spending for His Cause, a portion of what He has given us. Therefore, giving to the Funds of the Faith is not only a matter of generosity; it is also a spiritual bounty and a great individual responsibility. The Guardian has told us that we should be like a fountain that is continually emptying itself of all that it possesses and is continually being refilled from an invisible source.

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There are a number of Bahá'í Funds each supporting the work of the Faith at a particular level. Thus we have the Local Fund, the National Fund, the Continental Fund, and the International Fund. The individual Bahá'í has the privilege of contributing to every one of these Funds, and only Bahá'ís have the right to do so. Contributing to the Fund is a voluntary act. Moreover, it is confidential in the sense that it is a matter between the individual and the institutions of the Faith; contributions are not announced to the community. Also certain practices of many religions that result in undue pressure on the believers to contribute are avoided. The institutions make general appeals to the friends, remind them of the importance of the Fund, and discuss with them its needs. Not infrequently, a community will set a contribution goal for itself. But amounts are never fixed for individuals, and money is not solicited. It is left to the believers themselves to decide how much they should contribute to the various Funds according to their own understanding of the principles involved.

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