

Quotations About Art

I rejoice to hear that thou takest pains with thine art, for in this wonderful new age, art is worship. The more thou strivest to perfect it, the closer wilt thou come to God. What bestowal greater than this, that one's art should be even as the act of worshipping the Lord? That is to say, when thy fingers grasp the paint brush, it is as if thou wert at prayer in the Temple.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Knowledge is one of the wondrous gifts of God. It is incumbent upon everyone to acquire it. Such arts and material means as are now manifest have been achieved by virtue of His knowledge and wisdom which have been revealed in Epistles and Tablets through His Most Exalted Pen--a Pen out of whose treasury pearls of wisdom and utterance and the arts and crafts of the world are brought to light.

– Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

Know thou that the reality of man embraces the realities of things, and discovers the verities, properties and secrets of things. So all these arts, wonders, sciences and knowledge have been discovered by the human reality. At one time these sciences, knowledge, wonders and arts were hidden and concealed secrets; then gradually the human reality discovered them and brought them from the realm of the invisible to the plane of the visible.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions

Such arts and material means as are now manifest have been achieved by virtue of His [God's] knowledge and wisdom which have been revealed in Epistles and Tablets through His Most Exalted Pen - a Pen out of whose treasury pearls of wisdom and utterance and the arts and crafts of the world are brought to light.

– Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh

By the power of the Holy Spirit, working through his soul, man is able to perceive the Divine Reality of things. All great works of art and science are witnesses to this power of the Spirit.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks

All Art is a gift of the Holy Spirit. When this light shines through the mind of a musician, it manifests itself in beautiful harmonies. Again, shining through the mind of a poet, it is seen in fine poetry and poetic prose. When the light of the Sun of Truth inspires the mind of a painter, he produces marvellous pictures. These gifts are fulfilling their highest purpose when showing forth the praise of God.

– attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Lady Blomfield, The Chosen Highway

...the function of language is to portray the mysteries and secrets of human hearts. The heart is like a box, and language is the key. Only by using the key can we open the box and observe the gems it contains.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p.60

O My Servants

Ye are the trees of my garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent on everyone to engage in crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of wealth, O men of understanding! For results depend upon means, and the grace of God shall be all-sufficient unto you. Trees that yield no fruit have been and will ever be for the fire.

– Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words

In accordance with the Divine Teachings, the acquisition of sciences and the perfection of arts is considered as acts of worship. If a man engages with all his power in the acquisition of a science or in the perfection of an art, it is as if he has been worshipping God in the churches and temples...What bounty greater than this that science should be considered as an act of worship and art as service to the Kingdom of God.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith

Arts, crafts and sciences uplift the world of being, and are conducive to its exaltation. Knowledge is as wings to man's life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone. The

knowledge of such sciences, however, should be acquired as can profit the peoples of the earth, and not those which begin with words and end with words...

In truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and a source of glory, of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him. Happy the man that cleaveth unto it, and woe betide the heedless.

– Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

He must therefore put forth a mighty effort, striving by day and night and resting not for a moment, to acquire an abundant share of all the sciences and arts, that the Divine Image, which shineth out from the Sun of Truth, may illumine the mirror of the hearts of men.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth. All the wondrous works ye behold in this world have been manifested through the operation of His supreme and most exalted Will, His wondrous and inflexible Purpose. Through the mere revelation of the word "Fashioner" issuing forth from his lips and proclaiming His attribute to mankind, such power is released as can generate, through successive ages, all the manifold arts which the hands of man can produce...No sooner is this resplendent Word uttered than its animating energies, stirring within all created things, give birth to the means and instruments whereby such arts can be produced and perfected. All the wondrous achievements ye now witness are the direct consequences of the Revelation of this Name.

– Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

He sincerely hopes that as the Cause grows and talented persons come under its banner, they will begin to produce in art the divine spirit that animates their soul. Every religion has brought with it some form of art...The Temple with all its beauty is only the first ray of an early dawn; even more wondrous things are to be achieved in the future.

– Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, dated 11/12/31, to Mrs. Nina Matthison

The purpose of learning should be the promotion of the welfare of the people, and this can be achieved through crafts. It hath been revealed and is now repeated that the true worth of artists and craftsmen should be appreciated, for they advance the affairs of mankind. Just as the foundations of religion are made firm through the Law of God, the means of livelihood depend upon those who are engaged in arts and crafts. True learning is that which is conducive to the well-being of the world, not to pride and self-conceit, or to tyranny, violence and pillage.

– Bahá'u'lláh from a Tablet translated from Persian

Consider the relation between the craftsman and his handiwork, between the painter and his painting. Can it ever be manifested that the work their hands produced is the same as themselves? By Him Who is the Lord of the Throne above and of earth below! They can be regarded in no other light except as evidences that proclaim the excellence and perfection of their author.

– Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

Can you paint upon the page of the world the ideal pictures of the Celestial Concourse? The pictures which are in the ideal world are eternal. I wish you to become such an artist. Man can paint those ideal pictures upon the tablet of existence with the brush of deeds.

The holy, divine Manifestations are all heavenly artists. Upon the canvas of creation, with the brush of their deeds and lives they paint immortal pictures which cannot be found in any art museum of Europe or America. But you find the masterpieces of these spiritual artists in the hearts.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Star of the West, Vol. V, p. 149

There will be a new art, a new architecture, fused of all the beauty of the past, but new.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Star of the West

In this Day the sun of craftsmanship shineth above the horizon of the occident and the river of arts is flowing out of the sea of that region. One must speak with fairness and appreciate such bounty...

– Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

Such a chaste and holy life...involves no less than the exercise of moderation in all that pertains to dress, language, amusements, and all artistic and literary avocations...It condemns the prostitution of art and literature...It can tolerate no compromise with the theories, the standards, the habits, and the excesses of a decadent age.

– Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice

Blessed are those who have fixed their gaze on the realm of glory and have followed the commandments of the Lord of Names. Blessed is he who in the days of God will engage in handicrafts. This is a bounty from God, for in this Most Great Dispensation it is acceptable in the sight of God for man to occupy himself in a trade which relieveth him of depending upon charity. The craft of every craftsman is regarded as worship.

– Bahá'u'lláh, from a Tablet translated from Persian

At the outset of every endeavour, it is incumbent to look to the end of it. Of all the arts and sciences, set the children to studying those which will result in advantage to man, will ensure his progress and elevate his rank. Thus the noisome odours of lawlessness will be dispelled, and thus through the high endeavours of the nation's leaders, all will live cradled, secure and in peace.

The Great Being saith: The learned of the day must direct the people to acquire those branches of knowledge which are of use, that both the learned themselves and the generality of mankind may derive benefits therefrom...

– Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

As for what the Supreme Pen hath previously set down, the reason is that in every art and skill, God loveth the highest perfection.

– Bahá'u'lláh from a Tablet translated from Persian

One of the names of God is the Fashioner. He loveth craftsmanship. Therefore any of His servants who manifesteth this attribute is acceptable in the sight of this Wronged One. Craftsmanship is a book among the books of divine sciences, and a treasure among the treasures of His heavenly wisdom. This is a knowledge with meaning, for some of the sciences are brought forth by words and come to an end with words.

– Bahá'u'lláh, from a Tablet translated from Persian

This most great, this fathomless and surging Ocean is near, astonishingly near, unto you. Behold it is closer to you than your life-vein! Swift as the twinkling of an eye ye can, if ye but wish it, reach and partake of this imperishable favor, this God-given grace, this incorruptible gift, this most potent and unspeakably glorious bounty...
Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

This page of quotations was excerpted from compilations by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, Haifa and Compilation of Compilations, vol. I, Arts and Crafts, Baha'i World Center.

Some compilations of Bahá'í writings about art: [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Enormous repository of [quotations about art](#) organized by topic.

