

Why Investigate Reality?

(1) Free Ourselves from Imitation:

"Among [Bahá'u'lláh's] teachings was the independent investigation of reality so that the world of humanity may be saved from the darkness of imitation and attain to the truth."

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 298
(Bahá'í World Centre, 1982
Lightweight Edition)

Why is Imitation Bad?

Imitation

- is "the root cause of prejudice"
(ibid., p. 247)
- "destroys the foundation of religion"
- "extinguishes the spirituality of the human world"
- "transforms heavenly illumination into darkness"
- "deprives man of the knowledge of God"

'Abdu'l-Bahá
The Promulgation of Universal Peace
p. 161
(U.S., 2nd Edition, 1982)

"The greatest cause of bereavement and disheartening in the world of humanity is ignorance based upon blind imitation. It is due to this that wars and battles prevail;

from this cause hatred and animosity arise continually among mankind."

ibid., p. 291

(2) Attaining World Peace:

"If this investigation of reality becomes universal...the world will become united."

ibid., p. 222

"Of such cardinal importance is this principle of unity that it is expressly referred to in the Book of [Bahá'u'lláh's] Covenant, and He unreservedly proclaims it as the central purpose of His Faith. 'We, verily,' He declares, 'have come to unite and weld together all that dwell on earth.'"

Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By
p. 217

How We Investigate Reality

The investigation of reality, like blind imitation, is an action. Just as we imitate on a daily basis, we can learn to see our surroundings anew, breaking free of preconceived ideas and habitual patterns, and investigating reality on a daily basis. This is an ongoing process; it is not accomplished for all time in a single moment.

The Investigation of Reality is a Basic Human Right

"For Bahá'ís, the most fundamental of human rights is the right of each individual to investigate reality for himself or herself, and to benefit from the results of this exploration. That such a right exists is to us self-evident from the fact that the human consciousness is endowed with the intellectual, moral, spiritual and aesthetic capacities needed to undertake such an effort."

Bahá'í International Community,
"Development, Democracy and Human Rights"

"The freedom to investigate the purpose of existence and to develop the endowments of human nature that make it achievable requires protection. Human beings must be free to know. That such freedom is often abused and such abuse grossly encouraged by features of contemporary society does not detract in any degree from the validity of the impulse itself."

Bahá'í International Community
"The Prosperity of Humankind"

The Investigation of Reality is also an Obligation

"The first teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the duty incumbent upon all to investigate reality."

The Need for Investigation

"What [human beings] desperately need is to know how to live their lives – they need to know who they are, to what purpose they exist, and how they should act towards one another; and, once they know the answers to these questions they need to be helped to gradually apply these answers to everyday behaviour."

The Universal House of Justice
Letter dated 19 November 1974
to an individual

The Foundation for the Investigation of Reality offers to assist individuals to discover who they really are, and to live life more fulfillingly through a better understanding of their reality. The following aspects of reality are particularly important:

- self - true identity, the soul
- human relations - interaction between souls

- time - how much do souls have, and how to spend it
- right and wrong behavior - higher self (soul) controlling and nurturing lower self (material self), and lower self serving higher self
- purpose and power - using the soul's faculties to achieve its purposes.

For more information about how the Foundation can help you investigate reality, contact:

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Investigating Reality

Why do it?

"The activity most intimately linked to the consciousness that distinguishes human nature is the individual's exploration of reality for himself or herself."

Bahá'í International Community
"The Prosperity of Humankind"