

"As to thy question concerning the worlds of God. Know thou of a truth that the worlds of God are countless in their number, and infinite in their range. None can reckon or comprehend them except God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."

Travel to Other Planets

Bahá'u'lláh's son, Abdu'l-Bahá, visited the West in order to spread His father's teachings. In 1913 He gave a talk in Paris about the great technological and scientific strides which were being made at the time. During the talk he stated that it was time to start making efforts towards reaching other planets. He also spoke of: "...the construction of railroads from the earth to the heavens, or means of transportation with the rapidity of rising lightning from the globe of the earth to the globe of the sun..."

Bahá'u'lláh also foresaw rapid technological developments which would make possible things of which few had even dreamt:

"Strange and astonishing things exist in the earth but they are hidden from the minds and the understanding of men. These things are capable of changing the whole atmosphere of the earth and their contamination would prove lethal. Great God! We have observed an amazing thing. Lightning or a force similar to it is controlled by an operator and moveth at his command. Immeasurably exalted is the Lord of Power Who hath laid bare that which He purposed through the potency of His weighty and invincible command."

Planetary Frontiers

As popular science fiction programmes have shown, a number of problems within human society need to be addressed before humanity is ready to encounter other beings in the universe.

It is inconceivable that humanity could explore deep space, and hope to meet other life forms, as a divided species.

Bahá'u'lláh's teachings are designed to unite the planet and bring humanity to maturity. Bahá'ís believe that religion progresses through the ages. The basic truths are always the same, but the definition of who is our neighbour constantly expands. Initially perhaps it was someone from the same family, then village, tribe and nation. Now it is becoming increasingly obvious that "the earth is but one country and mankind its citizens". This needs to become a reality before we are ready for contact with creatures from other planets.

Successive religions have brought to humanity those teachings and concepts for which the world was ready. Each religion has built on the one before, expanding the ideas of its predecessor, and establishing new social laws according to the stage of development which the planet had reached. Bahá'u'lláh laid out a system of administration which is designed for planetary government, and states that "All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilisation."

This world system must be based on the principle of justice. Applied to economics this would ensure a more equitable distribution of the earth's resources. Applied to society it means that every person is seen as of equal value, with a contribution to make to the global civilisation. Prejudices of class, colour and creed must be set aside as primitive and morally wrong. The masculine and feminine qualities within humanity need to be properly balanced and used. Scientific and technological progress must be guided by moral principles.

As communication would be a prime concern in any contact with other life forms, the human race needs to agree on a planetary language and a common script. Each nation in the worldwide federation would wish to keep its own language and culture, but the planetary language would be used for world communication.

The Inner Frontier

The idea of the parallel universe is one much-loved by science fiction writers. The Bahá'í teachings clearly state that sentient beings have souls, and that at the time of death these pass from one plane of existence to another. The material reality is closely connected to the spiritual reality, even though we are not always aware of it. The next world is all around us, in the same way that this world surrounds a child in the womb.

Bahá'ís believe that a soul's purpose is to develop sufficiently to be ready for the next world, and that all existence is a training ground from which we can learn about God and ourselves.

The planes of existence are limitless and allow for infinite progress:

"For in this universe of God, which appears in the most complete perfection, beauty and grandeur, the luminous stars of the material universe are innumerable! Then we must reflect how limitless and infinite are the spiritual worlds, which are the essential foundation."

However far we travel, and however

many wonders we encounter, it is our own spirituality which ensures our happiness and that of others. Once we realise our own place in the universe, and the importance of following God's teachings for today, we will be ready to explore new worlds and seek out new civilisations.

"O SON OF MAN! Wert thou to speed through the immensity of space and traverse the expanse of heaven, yet thou wouldst find no rest save in submission to Our command and humbleness before Our Face."

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