

peace.

Peace by Degrees

It is obvious that the human world is not capable of transforming itself overnight into one united, loving family. But a framework of political peace, as described above, should be possible to achieve.

Though a very welcome first step, this would be a limited peace based on fear – fear of retribution. A more positive and lasting peace would be based on love, on recognition of our common humanity. Achieving this kind of peace will be a more gradual process.

Some Fundamental Principles

There are some basic principles on which a future world system should be built. Chief among these should be the “oneness” of mankind – a recognition that all human beings are ultimately from one human stock. Alongside this should be the recognition that each of the world’s major historical belief systems – the world religions – has its own part to play in promoting the well-being of mankind. Bahá’u’lláh actually went further than this, declaring them all to be the result of divine providence: all the religions are part of the one divine plan, leading us to an ever-advancing civilisation. Religion in its pure form has always been a unifying force for good. On the other hand, Bahá’u’lláh warned against religious fanaticism and hatred which he described as “a world-devouring fire”. The recognition of other faiths and acceptance of other ethnic groups would remove the basis of many conflicts.

The peoples of the world should also choose one language, to be taught in every school, as a means of universal communication. Once this is adopted, a major barrier to mutual understanding will rapidly disappear. The Bahá’í Writings say: “Peace must first be established among individuals, until it leadeth in the end to peace among nations.”

The Voice of Women

Another underlying principle is that everyone should have the right to an education. Bahá’u’lláh particularly stressed the importance of educating girls, as they are the mothers of the future and the first teachers of their children. Women as a whole readily recognise the importance of world peace because, when they have devoted their lives to bringing up their children, they do not generally wish to see them sacrificed on the field of battle. When women’s voices are heard in every country, there will be a more powerful movement towards peace. Bahá’í communities in every country work to raise up women to their proper place in society – an equal partnership with men.

World Administration

Bahá’ís envisage the world evolving gradually towards the long term goal of a form of world administration. A world parliament would allow for the discussion of important issues and a world system of law and justice would help to establish order in the world. There is already a great deal of co-operation

in law enforcement, as well as in areas such as transport, communications and health. There is scope for so much more.

A Moral Basis

Bahá'u'lláh emphasised the need for moral regeneration in order for these new systems to work successfully. Unfortunately, corruption exists to a greater or lesser extent in most societies. Bahá'u'lláh described trustworthiness as a fundamental and essential virtue:

“Trustworthiness is the greatest portal leading unto the tranquillity and security of the people. In truth the stability of every affair hath depended and doth depend upon it.”

Each country needs to demonstrate that it is trustworthy in order that binding commitments can be made in the path towards peace.

A Fairer Economic System

At first sight, bringing about a fairer economic system may not seem to be essential to world peace. However, while individual countries put their own short term interests above those of others, we will continue to experience instability. Rather than decisions being made based solely on selfish interests, the recognition of our common humanity should lead to the principle of justice for all.

The world should also agree on one system of weights and measures and adopt a single currency. This would greatly assist in bringing equality to the nations.

As Bahá'u'lláh said:

“The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.”

Peace Will Come

Bahá'u'lláh promised:

“These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come...”

It is the responsibility of those of us who are on earth at the moment to create this peace, both for our own generation and for those who will come after us.

If you would like to join the Bahá'ís in their peace-building and community-building efforts, please find contact information at bahai.org

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