

It would seem that civilisation has indeed been carried to excess and that we are now facing the consequences.

Preserving
the Ecosystem

In the Bahá'í Writings there is much said about the relationship of humanity with our environment. Bahá'ís have an attitude of respect for the earth and all its creatures. We must “show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature.”

Bahá'ís see the whole of creation as an entity:

“... even as the human body in this world, which is outwardly composed of different limbs and organs, is in reality a closely integrated, coherent entity, similarly the structure of the physical world is like unto a single being whose limbs and members are inseparably linked together.”

If we are all linked, then we are all dependent on one another's existence for our own well-being.

The diversity of life forms needs to be preserved, not just to maintain an ecological balance but for our own particular benefit too. A variety of plants are required to maintain a healthy diet, as well as for medicinal purposes.

The Bahá'í Writings state that agriculture is the world's most important industry – an obvious fact which often tends to be overlooked. The methods of agriculture, however, need to be such that an ecological balance is maintained. For example, research has shown that growing vegetable crops uses far less resources than rearing animals for food. Bahá'u'lláh's son, to whom He passed on authority, is reported as saying, in the early part of the 20th century, that, “...our natural diet is that which grows out of the ground.”

Justice

One of the basic principles of the Bahá'í Faith is justice. Bahá'u'lláh said, “...fix your gaze under all conditions upon justice and fairness.” We all

have an equal right to the world's resources, and no-one has a right to more than his or her fair share.

Bahá'ís

see global warming as fundamentally a spiritual problem. Too many of us have been using more than we should of the world's resources. Bahá'ís believe that the material aspects of life need to be guided by spiritual principles in order to achieve a sustainable and happy life. All of the world's great religions have this same underlying belief – none of them encourages greed or selfishness.

As

individuals we all need to play our part, but this means changes in lifestyle, which require a change of heart. We need a spiritual renewal, giving us the courage and strength to make the necessary changes, for the sake of all humanity.

If we understand that our purpose in life is to learn and grow spiritually, to become better people, then we will not feel the need to acquire more and more material possessions in order to prove our worth, or to try to make ourselves happy. It is a sobering thought that the source of all our wealth is the ground which we tread beneath our feet.

Unity

and Co-operation

The

most fundamental principle of the Bahá'í Faith is unity. This means, firstly,

that there needs to be a recognition that all human beings are of equal value, of whatever gender, race, faith or nation, and that we need to respect and to look

after one another. Those of us who use a lot of the world's resources will need

to use less, to make sacrifices, in order to ensure that every individual can have enough of what they need.

Secondly,

we need to work together to achieve our goals. For humanity to survive, the human habitat, like that of any other species, must be sustainable. The maintenance

of a suitable environment for all living things is a global problem. Problems like climate change know no boundaries and the causes need to be tackled at a global level. Bahá'ís believe that in reality we need a form of world government to implement worldwide solutions. It must be able to manage the resources of the earth for the good of all:

“The well-being of

mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.”

Although Bahá'ís believe that the world should be organised as if it were one country, they recognise that excessive centralisation is a danger to be avoided. Each piece of the planet's surface is held in trust by the local inhabitants as well as by mankind as a whole. We all need to ensure that our own local area contributes to the well-being of the whole world rather than having a negative impact on it.

Balance
and Harmony

We upset the balance of nature at our
peril:

“For
every part of the universe is connected with every other part by ties that are
very powerful and admit of no imbalance...”

Mankind
has a faculty which plants and animals do not have, the power to discover the
secrets of nature. We therefore have the responsibility to use this power only
in a positive way, to ensure that balance is maintained in the world.

If
we can all recognise the spiritual basis of life and make the necessary changes
in lifestyle, we can solve the problem of global warming which has led to
climate
change. Bahá'ís are hopeful for the future:

“The Lord of all
mankind hath fashioned this human realm to be a Garden of Eden, an earthly
paradise. If, as it must, it findeth the way to harmony and peace, to love and
mutual trust, it will become a true abode of bliss, a place of manifold
blessings and unending delights. Therein shall be revealed the excellence of
humankind...”

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