



of everything, that first cause which we call God. The main links between man and this first cause have been religions, brought by a series of Great Teachers, each of Whom, in their own time and place, have helped civilisation forward. We cannot seriously expect to improve the present state of the world if we ignore religion. When religion works for good it influences people to behave better. Bahá'u'lláh said:

"Religion is the greatest of all means for the establishment of order in the world and for the peaceful contentment of all that dwelt therein".

However, when religion is changed and perverted by human beings, it can add greatly to the problem; religious fanaticism does not help the cause of peace.

If we look at the words of the Founders of the world's great religions, we can see that they have all said very similar things. The same divine spirit has inspired them all. All religions teach "The Golden Rule", that we should treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated. If every believer followed this rule, we could have had peace already for many years.

Many people have turned away from religion, and have turned either to the selfish pursuit of material things or have followed man-made political theories trying to put the world right. None of these ideas has succeeded because none has actively promoted the unity of mankind.

#### MOVING AWAY FROM WAR

Banning weapons will not remove war: we must remove the root causes. A start has been made in moving towards a world order. Groups of countries are working together, as in the European Community. Many countries have accepted United Nations conventions, such as those on Human Rights, but there are many problems we still need to solve if we really want peace.

#### Racism

This is one of the worst evils. It takes away human dignity, it corrupts those who have racist ideas, and it slows down human progress. We must recognise the oneness of mankind.

#### Extremes of Poverty and Wealth

The vast difference between rich and poor people and countries keeps the world in an unstable state. A fresh look at the whole problem is needed, free from preconceived ideas, and involving the people most directly affected in the consultative process.

#### Nationalism

Loving your country is only right and proper. But extreme nationalism must give way to a love of humanity as a whole. Bahá'u'lláh said: "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

#### Religious strife

Quarrels between religions have always been a barrier to progress. The religious leaders must look at the state of humanity, and ask themselves, before God, whether they cannot now be tolerant of one another and work together for understanding and peace.

#### The Role of Women

One of the most important things which must happen before we can have real peace is the emancipation of women. Both halves of humanity must be able to work together for peace.

Universal Education

Ignorance and prejudice hold people back. Every child should be educated to be a citizen of the world.

A World Language

We need to choose a world language, extra to our own, which would be a great help in communications between people and nations.

Spiritual Solutions for Social Problems

If all of these problems are to be solved, it requires a spiritual commitment from each person in order to make it work. This same attitude will be needed if peace is to last.

A NEW WORLD ORDER

The main question is, how can we change the world, with all its conflict, into one of harmony and co-operation? World order can only be founded on a strong belief in the oneness of mankind, a spiritual truth which is backed up by scientific investigation. We must abandon prejudice of race, class, colour, creed, nation, sex, and degree of wealth or material civilisation. Only then can we successfully establish world peace. The countries of the world need to be united, but every nation will still be self-governing and keep its own character. At present there are no clear rules as to how nations should relate to one another. Then United Nations Organisation is a step in the right direction, but there are still many wars being fought. There needs to be a world body which will prevent war. We need a world parliament, and a world court to settle disputes between countries. In the world civilisation of the future, trade barriers will disappear, everyone will understand that capital and labour depend on one another, and that there will be no more religious strife.

Bahá'u'lláh stated that:

"The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realised. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and ... must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men."

When the world does come together to discuss its problems in the right spirit, no power on earth will be able to resist the final outcome. This conference will set out to establish a union of the nations of the world. The representatives of each country must sign a world peace treaty, which cannot be broken. All humanity must approve and support it wholeheartedly. It will include principles for the relationships between governments, and rules for action by the rest of the world against any government which seeks to break the peace treaty.

The need for this world gathering is urgent - the leaders of all nations must take steps to call it into being as soon as possible. The United Nations will surely help. Men, women, youth and children everywhere must raise their voices in support of this gathering. It will mark the dawn of the maturity of mankind.

## A UNITED WORLD

The ultimate goal for humanity is that all the peoples of the world should unite in one human family. Bahá'u'lláh wrote that:

"The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established."

Progress is being made towards unity among many groups and organisations, including the Bahá'í community. This community consists of several million people from many nations, cultures, classes and creeds, working together on spiritual, social and economic activities. Bahá'ís use the same system of consultation everywhere, and except equally all the great religions of the past. If the experience of the Bahá'ís can help in any way, they would be happy to share it. Despite repeated persecution over many years, the Bahá'ís still have faith that unity and peace are not only inevitable, but are now within reach. They remember Bahá'u'lláh's promise:

"These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."

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