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Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts in Political Science

**THE WORLD INTO ONE NATION:  
World Peace and the Bahá'í Faith**

By

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KYUNG HEE UNIVERSITY

Seoul, Korea

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A Thesis

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Submitted by

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This Master's Thesis of Nahzy Abadi Buck (Behnaz Abadi) is  
approved by:

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Graduate School  
of  
Kyung Hee University  
June 1981

This humble work is dedicated to the memory of my dear Bahá'í friend and mentor, H. Farnoosh, who lost his life for his beloved Faith in Tihnan, on June 22, 1981.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In this thesis on *The World Into One Nation*, the author has discussed how we can have a whole human society, united and cooperative, just like that of a single country or family. At first, the topic of this thesis may come as a surprise, perhaps because we usually think in terms of the nations of the world being separate and independent, not only because of physical boundaries, but also because of linguistic, racial and cultural differences. But if we consider each individual country, with their many differences, such as the United States in particular, Iran, Russia or India, as united under one federal government, why should it be impossible or inappropriate for the whole of human society to unite under one world government?

Opposition to the establishment of such a system usually arises from a misunderstanding of the nature of or lack of appreciation of the diversity in the human family.

If we examine the nature of nationalism itself, we will discover that many of the elements in nationalism are directly applicable to a world federation, although it has been said that: "A century of nationalism has produced no precise and acceptable definition."<sup>1</sup>

A century ago, John Stuart Mill offered the following classic definition:

A portion of mankind may be said to constitute a nationality. If they are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between them and any others, which make them cooperate with each other more willingly than with other people, the desire to be under the same government by themselves or a portion of themselves exclusively.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Harcourt, *Issues in Politics and Government* (Houghton Mifflin, U.S.A., 1970), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Not only can the elements of common sympathy, cooperation and sacrifice or every individual which benefit the whole be extracted from the idea of nationalism, they can be applied to a world federation.

A similar idea is expressed in the following statement by Renan:

Nations are not something eternal—they have begun, they will end. ... They will be replaced, in all probability, by a European confederation.<sup>3</sup>

We could also draw many parallels between the widely varying, functional organs of the body which are all joined together and coordinate their activities under a central system to form the miracle of the human body.

That the world is indeed advancing, however awkwardly, toward this world federation, can be witnessed everyday. Advances in the technologies of transportation and communications have made the world much smaller and closer. Even the most remote of villages on any continent can experience the evidences of progress and influences of other civilizations. Eating coconuts and bananas in Alaska, listening to amazing stories of Superman in Alaska, drinking Coke on the Great Wall in China, indulging in the hobbies, sports and other interests of other countries—all these are now commonplace scenes in everyday life.

Also the exchange and penetration of ideas and thought patterns has also reached similar though perhaps not equal proportions. Nowadays, when a Japanese woman observes on television the more direct influence of Western ladies in society, she becomes less satisfied with being a mere “bondswoman.” Or when people from both the communist and capitalist territories are informed of the other’s successes, their expectations rise and they ask, “Why not me?” When a starving African watches how a contestant on a television program can win a prize by eating ten pounds of sausage at once, he asks himself “Why?” Among the elements of human society we see that:

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

The variation in the standards of living range from mass starvation to abundance; the variations in freedom, from tyranny to democracy; from economic slavery to equality; the variations in distribution of power subject to constitutional limitations. This nation enjoys freedom, yet starves; that nation is well fed but longs for freedom; still another enjoys security of life and individual freedom. [Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 252.)

But the reality of the present is that we can no longer contain a nation of people in a cage of ignorance or impose upon them certain ideas and conditions for any extended period. All are aware of other lands and other peoples with other modes of living. Thus the range of possibilities for themselves is extended, expectations rise and demands increase. These demands cannot shrink back permanently into their former bounds of nationalistic principle. So a new principle must be sought. This principle is one of an organic humanity.

Spiritual and social evolutions have always characterized the course of human history to this hour. So its needs and demands are subject to change. Just as a young man is not able to wear his childhood clothes, so the people of this time cannot live under the conditions and circumstances of a former time. And just as a youth will undergo great and exciting changes, mentally, morally and physically, when entering the state of manhood, so mankind will undergo many disturbances and reformations while entering the stage of maturity, which is the stage of world unity and world peace. At every stage of transition, most recently from tribal to municipal to national, civilization has been with confusion and convulsions of change. At this stage towards world unity, too, the last stage of transition on this planet, civilization is beset with troubles. We have passed through the turmoil of two world wars and as alternately two conciliatory periods which produced first the League of Nations and now the United Nations. The latter, too, still has limited influence and authority, but simply its existence points to the direction in which mankind is inevitably heading. Political and economic power blocs, such as the European Common Market in West Europe, KOMEC among the East European countries, NATO, and members of the WARSAW Pact, have arisen from the merging and shifts of such forces from regional to national

to continental levels. Thus it is only natural and logical that humanity should soon submit itself to a strong, all-authoritative and respected world power that would mediate and administer all international disputes and affairs.

Most people are still largely negligent of the many troubles in the world and lack a sense of responsibility towards their fellow human beings. Scientists and philosophers doubt and ridicule the invitation to peace and consider the promoters thereof to be mere visionaries or people too removed from the cold, hard facts of reality. But there is a remedy. Because many people are either ignorant of its existence or unreceptive to its call, it seems mankind must suffer through much destruction before they recognize and accept it. This remedy will produce a progressive and healthy world civilization, a civilization which will preserve the many unique customs and characteristics of different cultures while unifying their political and economic systems through a firm foundation of spiritual principles. In other words, this civilization will be one of unity in diversity and will uphold the name of justice and of universal peace. This remedy is none other than the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, who has given us the blueprint for such a world, laid down the principles and guidelines for its construction, delineated the laws and structure of its directing institutions, and established the moral standards and characteristics of the individuals who will carry out and maintain its purpose. The body of these teachings revealed by Bahá'u'lláh is called the Bahá'í Faith.

In this thesis, the author finds it necessary to present a brief history of the development of the Bahá'í Faith for the sake of those who might have heard little about it. She has included statements and ideas of well-known scientists and politicians regarding the teachings and principles of the Bahá'í Faith. She has also elaborated on the principles and the means of executing these principles. The author likewise examines the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and the United Nations and provides statistical information on the expansion of Bahá'í Faith

Foremost throughout this thesis the author has every now and then emphasized the relevance of the Bahá'í Faith to the unity of mankind.

## CHAPTER II

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF BAHÁ'I FAITH

Excerpt from Shoghi Effendi's Statement to the Special UN Committee on Palestine, 1947:

#### **The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh: A World Religion**

Shoghi Effendi

The Bahá'í Faith revolves around three central Figures, the first of whom was a youth, a native of Shiraz, named Mírzá Alí-Muhammád, known as the Bab (Gate), who in May, 1844, at the age of twenty-five, advanced the claim of being the Herald Who, according to the sacred Scriptures of previous Dispensations, must needs announce and prepare the way for the advent of One greater than Himself, Whose mission would be according to those same Scriptures, to inaugurate an era of righteousness and peace, an era that would be hailed as the consummation of all previous Dispensations, and initiate a new cycle in the religious history of mankind. Swift and severe persecution, launched by the organized forces of Church and State in His native land, precipitated successively His arrest, His exile to the mountains of Adhirbayjan, His imprisonment in the fortresses of Mah-Ku and Chihriq and His execution, in July, 1850, by a firing squad in the public square of Tabriz. No less than twenty thousand of his followers were put to death with such barbarous cruelty as to evoke the warm sympathy and the unqualified admiration of a number of Western writers, diplomats, travellers and scholars, some of whom were witnesses of these abominable outrages, and were moved to record them in their books and diaries.

Mírzá Husayn-Alí, surnamed Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God), a native of Mazindaran, Whose advent the Bab had foretold, was assailed by those same

forces of ignorance and fanaticism, was imprisoned in Tihran, was banished, in 1852, from His native land to Baghdad, and thence to Constantinople and Adrianople, and finally to the prison city of Akká, where He remained incarcerated for no less than twenty-four years, and in whose neighborhood He passed away in 1892. In the course of His banishment, and particularly in Adrianople and Akká, He formulated the laws and ordinances of His Dispensation, expounded, in over a hundred volumes, the principles of His Faith, proclaimed His Message to the kings and rulers of both the East and the West, both Christian and Muslim, addressed the Pope, the Caliph of Islam, the Chief Magistrates of the Republics of the American continent, the entire Christian sacerdotal order, the leaders of Shi'ih and Sunni Islam, and the high priests of the Zoroastrian religion.<sup>4</sup>

In these writings He proclaimed His Revelation, summoned those whom He addressed to heed His call and espouse His Faith, warned them of the consequences of their refusal, and denounced, in some cases, their arrogance and tyranny.

His eldest son, Abbas Effendi, known as 'Abdu'l-Bahá (the Servant of Bahá), appointed by Him as the successor and the authorized interpreter of His teachings, who since early childhood had been closely associated with His Father, and shared His exile and tribulations, remained a prisoner until 1908, when as a result of the Young Turk Revolution, He was released from His confinement. Establishing His residence in Haifa, He embarked soon after on His three-year journey to Egypt, Europe and North America, in the course of which He expounded before vast audiences, the teachings of His Father and predicted the approach of that catastrophe that was soon to befall mankind. He returned to His home on the eve of the first World War, in the course of which He was exposed to constant danger, until liberation of Palestine by the forces under the command of General Allenby, who extended the utmost consideration

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<sup>4</sup> Shoghi Effendi, "The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh: A World Religion" (July 1947).

to Him and the small band of His fellow-exiles in Akká and Haifa. In 1921 He passed away, and was buried in a vault in the mausoleum erected on Mount Carmel, at the express instruction of Bahá'u'lláh for the remains of the Bab which had previously been transferred from Tabriz to the Holy Land after having been preserved and concealed for no less than sixty years.

The passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá marked the termination of the first and Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Faith and signaled the opening of the Formative Age destined to witness the gradual emergence of its Administrative Order, whose establishment had been foretold by the Bab, whose laws were revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, whose outlines were delineated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá'ín His Will and Testament, and whose foundations are now being laid by the national and local councils which are elected by the professed adherents of the Faith ... . [Shoghi Effendi, "The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh: A World Religion" (July 1947).]

'Abdu'l-Bahá appointed as the first Guardian and as His own successor, His eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, who was then twenty-four years old and a student at Oxford. Up until this time, his only ambition had been to serve the Faith by translating Bahá'í works into the English language.

The Guardian's first major task was to lay the foundation of a working Administrative Order throughout the world along the lines laid down by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Only when this was done could there be elected a Universal House of Justice. Though during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's time there were rudimentary Bahá'í forms of government in several local communities, it was the Guardian who surely, step by step knitted these communities into a regular and world-wide system.

By 1937 the Guardian was satisfied that the Bahá'í Administrative Order was firmly established and he felt able to turn his attention to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions for taking the Bahá'í Faith to all corners of the earth.

In November 1957, some four years after the Guardian, prematurely exhausted by thirty-six years of the most wearying work, died suddenly in London after an attack

of Asian flu. In October, Bahá'ís from all over the world came to attend the funeral of their beloved Guardian.

He was buried in a secluded glade of the Great Northern Cemetery in London. On his grave was erected a pillar surmounted by an eagle of victory, wings outspread over the globe, symbol of the hope of Man.

This Administrative Order, unlike the systems evolved after the death of the Founders of the various religions, is divine in origin, rests securely on the laws, the precepts, the ordinances and institutions which the Founder of the Faith has Himself specifically laid down and unequivocally established, and functions in strict accordance with the interpretations of the authorized Interpreters of its holy scriptures. Though fiercely assailed, ever since its inception, it has, by virtue of its character, unique in the annals of the world's religious history, succeeded in maintaining the unity of the diversified and far-flung body of its supporters, and enabled them to launch, unitedly and systematically, enterprises in both Hemispheres, designed to extend its limits and consolidate its administrative institutions. [Shoghi Effendi, "The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh: A World Religion" (July 1947).]

To emperors, kings, princes and potentates, to rulers, governments, clergy and peoples, whether of the East or of the West, whether Christian, Jew, Muslim, or Zoroastrian, He addressed, for well-nigh fifty years, and in the most tragic circumstances, these priceless pearls of knowledge and wisdom that lay hid within the ocean of His matchless utterance. Forsaking fame and fortune, accepting imprisonment and exile, careless of ostracism and obloquy, submitting to physical indignities and cruel deprivations, He, the Vicegerent of God on earth, suffered Himself to be banished from place to place and from country to country, till at length He, in the Most Great Prison, offered up His martyred son as a ransom for the redemption and unification of all mankind. "We verily," He Himself has testified, "have not fallen short of Our duty to exhort men, and to deliver that whereunto I was bidden by God, the Almighty, the All-Praised. Had

they hearkened unto Me, they would have beheld the earth another earth.”<sup>5</sup> And again: “Is there any excuse left for anyone in this Revelation? No, by God, the Lord of the Mighty Throne! My signs have encompassed the earth, and My power enveloped all mankind, and yet the people are wrapped in a strange sleep!”<sup>6</sup>

To kings generally Bahá’u’lláh wrote:

If ye pay no heed unto the counsels which, in peerless and unequivocal language, We have revealed in this Tablet, Divine chastisement shall assail you from every direction, and the sentence of His justice shall be pronounced against you.<sup>7</sup>

This Tablet was revealed in the 1860s. From then on, kings have gradually lost their power and most of them their thrones as well. The process is not irreversible, but temporarily, at least, kings are playing a decreasing part in managing the world’s affairs.

### **TO NAPOLEON III OF FRANCE**

The most powerful monarch at the time Bahá’u’lláh proclaimed His Message was Napoleon III of France. To him Bahá’u’lláh wrote two Tablets: the first meek in tone to test the sincerity of the Emperor, who did not answer it and is reported to have treated it with scorn; the second, sent in 1868, of a different kind altogether. It was translated into French and transmitted to the Emperor by the French agent who resided in ‘Akká.

In it occurred the following:

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<sup>5</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Call to the Nations* (London: W & J Mackay Limited, 1977), p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Bahá’u’lláh, translated by Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1980), p. 23.

Hadst thou been sincere in thy words, thou wouldst have not cast behind thy back the Book of God, when it was sent unto thee by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise. We have proved thee through it, and found thee other than that which thou didst profess. Arise, and make amends for that which escaped thee. Erelong the world and all that thou possessest will perish, and the kingdom will remain unto God, thy Lord and the Lord of thy fathers of old. It behooveth thee not to conduct thine affairs according to the dictates of thy desires. Fear the sighs of this Wronged One, and shield Him from the darts of such as act unjustly. For what thou hast done, thy kingdom shall be thrown into confusion, and thine empire shall pass from thine hands, as a punishment for that which thou hast wrought. Then wilt thou know how thou hast plainly erred. Commotions shall seize all the people in that land, unless thou arisest to help this Cause, and followest Him Who is the Spirit of God [Jesus] in this, the straight Path. Hath thy pomp made thee proud? By My Life! It shall not endure; nay, it shall soon pass away, unless thou holdest fast by this firm Cord. We see abasement hastening after thee, while thou art of the heedless.<sup>8</sup>

Two years later, in 1870, the French were unexpectedly defeated by the Prussians. Napoleon III's army surrendered in the greatest capitulation of modern times, he himself was taken prisoner and exiled, a Republic was formed, to be followed by civil war more terrible than the Franco-Prussian war itself. France fell into confusion. Napoleon's enemy William I, was proclaimed German Emperor in the Palace of Versailles. The whole world wondered at the sudden collapse of an Empire considered the strongest of its day, whose fall fulfilled to the letter the prophecy of Bahá'u'lláh.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

## TO QUEEN VICTORIA

Over a hundred years ago, in His Tablet to Queen Victoria, Bahá'u'lláh, addressing “the concourse of the rulers of the earth,” revealed the following:

Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind and bettereth the condition thereof. ... Regard the world as the human body which, though created whole and perfect, has been afflicted, through divers causes, with grave ills and maladies. Not for one day did it rest, nay its sicknesses waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of unskilled physicians who have spurred on the steed of their worldly desires and have erred grievously. And if at one time, through the care of an able physician, a member of that body was healed, the rest remained afflicted as before.<sup>9</sup>

In a further passage Bahá'u'lláh adds these words:

“We see you adding every year unto your expenditures and laying the burden thereof on the people whom ye rule; this verily is naught but grievous injustice. Fear the sighs and tears of this Wronged One, and burden not your peoples beyond that which they can endure. ... Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need armaments no more save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions. Be united, O concourse of the sovereigns of the world, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you and your peoples find rest. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.”

What else could these weighty words signify if they did not point to the inevitable curtailment of unfettered national sovereignty as an indispensable preliminary to the formation of the future Commonwealth of all the nations of the world?” Some form of a world super-state must needs be evolved, in whose favour all the nations of the world will have willingly ceded every claim to make

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<sup>9</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, translated by Shoghi Effendi, *Call to the Nations* (W & J Mackay Limited, UK, 1977), p. 26.

war, certain rights to impose taxation and all rights to maintain armaments, except for purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions. Such a state will have to include within its orbit an International Executive adequate to enforce supreme and unchallengeable authority on every recalcitrant member of the commonwealth ... .<sup>10</sup>

## TO WILLIAM I OF GERMANY

Addressing William I of Germany, the conqueror of Napoleon III, Bahá'u'lláh wrote in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas:<sup>11</sup>

Do thou remember the one [Napoleon] whose power transcended thy power, and whose station excelled thy station. ... Think deeply, O king, concerning him, and concerning them who, like unto thee, have conquered cities and ruled over men.<sup>12</sup>

And again:

O banks of the Rhine! We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and you shall have another turn. And We hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in conspicuous glory.<sup>13</sup>

These prophecies and warnings have been amply justified by the outcome of the two world wars that Germany has lost.

William I's grandson was defeated and abdicated. A republic was established whose government had no option but to acquiesce in a Peace Treaty of oppressive

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 26–27.

<sup>11</sup> “The Most Holy Book” of the Bahá'í Faith.

<sup>12</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, translated by Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

severity. A dictatorship, whose doctrines ran counter to all that is best in man, replaced it, leading inevitably to a second war and a second defeat. This time German cities were laid low by heavy bombing, Germany was split into four parts, and Berlin, no longer a capital city, was divided into zones controlled by disagreeing foreign powers.

### **TO ALEXANDER II OF RUSSIA**

Alexander II of Russia was three times warned by Bahá'u'lláh:

Beware lest thy desire deter thee from turning towards the face of thy Lord. ...  
Beware lest thou barter away this sublime station. ... Beware lest thy  
sovereignty withhold thee from Him Who is the Supreme Sovereign.”<sup>14</sup>

He initiated a reactionary policy, which his successors executed with even greater severity than his own until suppressed discontent ultimately burst forth as revolution.

Civil war, disease and starvation followed; a thorough-going materialism enveloped Russia; the Czar and most of his nobles were murdered. Thereafter the people of Russia suffered long continued deprivation to build up industrial capital, part of which was destroyed during the war fought on Russian soil in the 1940s and had to be rebuilt at the cost of further deprivation.

### **TO FRANCIS JOSEPH OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY**

In the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Bahá'u'lláh chided Francis Joseph for having failed to investigate His Cause:

Thou passed Him by, and inquired not about Him. ... We have been with thee at all times, and found thee clinging unto the Branch and heedless of the Root.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

The empire of the Hapsburgs has since disintegrated. All that remains of the once formidable Holy Roman Empire is a small state, the population of whose capital city, Vienna, is entirely disproportionate to the size of the country.

Francis Joseph himself experienced many misfortunes: his brother Maximilian was shot in Mexico; the Crown Prince Rudolph perished in a dishonourable affair; the Empress was assassinated; the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife were murdered in Sarajevo, giving rise to one of the most destructive and widespread wars the world has known.

### **TO ABDU'L-AZIZ OF TURKEY**

To Sultan Abdu'l-Aziz, Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "Bring thyself to account ere thou art summoned to a reckoning ... ." <sup>16</sup>

And in another place, more specifically:

Soon will He seize you in His wrathful anger, and sedition will be stirred up in your midst, and your dominions will be disrupted. Then will ye bewail and lament, and will find none to help or succor you. ... Several times calamities have overtaken you, and yet ye failed utterly to take heed. ... Erelong will ye behold that which hath been sent down from the Pen of My command. <sup>17</sup>

It was during the reign of Abdul-Aziz that Bahá'u'lláh revealed His Message. Exiled to domains of the Sultan, He was thrice moved by Imperial Decree from place to place within those domains, reaching finally the notorious prison city of 'Akká whose governors received instructions about Him, oppressive in their severity. His nephew Abdu'l-Hamid II oppressed 'Abdu'l-Bahá similarly.

Imperial Turkey, which under Abdu'l-Hamid I had been accepted by the European Nations and which had been on the winning side in the Crimean War, fell

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

under Abdu'l-Aziz into a swift decline. He was finally deposed by a palace revolution, denounced as incapable, and assassinated. His imbecile successor was deposed after three months.

During the reign of the next Sultan, the much hated Abdu'l-Hamid II, the Turkish Empire began to disintegrate; Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania, became independent; Bosnia and Herzegovina were ceded to Austria; French occupied Tunis, the British Cyprus and Egypt. Eventually hatred of Abdu'l-Hamid grew so intense that he was forced to abdicate.

After the 1914–18 war, the Turkish Empire was broken up and Turkey reduced to a minor Asiatic state with no more than a token holding in Europe. Constantinople lost its glory, thus fulfilling another of Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies:

Hath thine outward splendor made thee vainglorious? By Him Who is the Lord of mankind! It shall soon perish, and thy daughters, and thy widows, and all the kindreds that dwell within thee shall lament.<sup>18</sup>

Once the capital of the most powerful Empire in the world, Constantinople is now little more than a provincial city in a state no longer accounted one of the Great Powers.

### **TO NASIRI'D-DIN SHAH OF IRAN**

Nasiri'd-Din Shah, sovereign of Iran in the time of Bahá'u'lláh, instigated at the behest of the Muslim divines the martyrdom of the Bab, the banishment of Bahá'u'lláh, and the persecution of the Bahá'ís. Subsequently his Ministers' scheming was instrumental in persuading the Sultan to send Bahá'u'lláh from Baghdad to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Adrianople, and from Adrianople to 'Akká.

Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Nasiri'd-Din Shah, the bearer of which was immediately seized and cruelly martyred, was gentle in tone with many such passages as:

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

O would that thou wouldst permit Me, O Sháh, to send unto thee that which would cheer the eyes, and tranquilize the souls, and persuade every fair-minded person that with Him is the knowledge of the Book.<sup>19</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh made no specific prophecy about Nasiri'd-Din Shah, possibly to avoid bringing further persecution upon the suffering Iranian Bahá'ís. But the Bab earlier had written:

O King of Islám! Aid thou, with the truth, after having aided the Book, Him Who is Our Most Great Remembrance, for God hath, in very truth, destined for thee, and for such as circle round thee, on the Day of Judgment, a responsible position in His Path. I swear by God, O Sháh! If thou showest enmity unto Him Who is His Remembrance, God will, on the Day of Resurrection, condemn thee, before the kings, unto hellfire, and thou shalt not, in very truth, find on that Day any helper except God, the Exalted.<sup>20</sup>

The Qajar dynasty, of which Nasiri'd-Din Shah was a member, brought so many troubles to Persia that the particular troubles of the reign of Nasiri'd-Din Shah and his successors do not stand out so distinctly, as do the events reported earlier in this chapter. Chaos, bankruptcy and oppression enveloped the country. He himself was assassinated on the eve of a jubilee which was to inaugurate a new era. His successor was forced to sign a constitution limiting his own powers, and the next two Shahs were deposed. It is noteworthy that grandsons of both Sultan Abdu'l-Aziz and Nasiri'd-Din Shah have turned for help to the World Centre of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, which offered personal financial assistance to the first and firmly refused political help to the second, as to any other political intriguer.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

## TO POPE PIUS IX

At the time of Bahá'u'lláh, the Pope was a temporal monarch as well as a religious leader. To him Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

Beware lest any name debar thee from God, the Creator of earth and heaven. Leave thou the world behind thee, and turn towards thy Lord, through Whom the whole earth hath been illumined. ... Dwellest thou in palaces whilst He Who is the King of Revelation liveth in the most desolate of abodes? Leave them unto such as desire them, and set thy face with joy and delight towards the Kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

The Pope's domain had long been decreasing in size and power. In 1870 it was finally extinguished; even Rome ceased to be under his rule after that was conquered by Victor Immanuel and the Pope accused him of heresy.

The decay of the Pope's temporal authority is now complete, but his religious authority decays still, along with the institutions of other religious sects.

## OF DIVINES GENERALLY

Bahá'u'lláh has written: "From two ranks amongst men power hath been seized: kings and ecclesiastics."<sup>22</sup> We saw above about kings, but divines also are losing their power. Bahá'ís expect the dignity, although not the power, of kingship eventually to be restored, but the day of the divines has gone forever.

The Bahá'í Writings authoritatively state: none has the right to act as intermediary between man and the Holy Spirit. This is one of the signs that the capacity of men in this age is greater than in former ages.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 20, 71; quoted in John Ferraby, *All Things Made New* (New Delhi, India: Bahá'í Publishing, 1975), p. 63.

Bahá'u'lláh addressed a number of Tablets to the divines of former religions, to whom He referred in many of His general writings also. He praises the ones who are sincere in their obedience to God.

If He is a Manifestation of God, His teachings are true, whether we agree with them or not. Should the whole world arise against him, as virtually it did, His teachings would still be true. Failure of current opinion to confirm them would demonstrate only the imperfection of current opinion; fashionable opinions have been wrong before and can be wrong again. The crucial question for each individual is whether to accept the claim Bahá'u'lláh makes that He is a Manifestation of God, for when this has been accepted, all else follows. So great a claim can best be assessed by considering the history and teachings of His Faith as a whole.

## CHAPTER III

### OPINION OF WORLD LEADERS ON THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND ITS TEACHINGS

In this part we will discuss about world leaders, such as scholars and statesmen who have said and written about the Bahá'í Faith and its Teachings. Before doing so, however, I should emphasize that the truth and value of the Bahá'í Teachings and of the example of its Founder are manifest in themselves and need no outside approval or appreciation to confirm their reality. It is only because human beings tend to reject independent investigation of truth and tend to cling to prejudicial and irrational feelings that we mention the statements of world leaders on the Bahá'í Faith.

#### QUEEN MARIE OF ROMANIA

Alone among those of royal blood, alone among her sister-queens, Marie of Rumania recognized the dawning of the Day of Days and acclaimed in Bahá'u'lláh the Glory of the Father.

Marie, the eldest daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh, was born in the purple; but she had this special distinction that in her veins ran the blood of the only two royalties to whom Bahá'u'lláh, when He announced His Advent to the world's rulers, addressed words of commendation.<sup>23</sup> She was on her mother's side the granddaughter of Czar Alexander II, who abolished serfdom, and on her father's side of Queen Victoria, both of whom Bahá'u'lláh addressed in words different from the stern terms used by Him towards the King of Prussia, the Emperors of Austria and France, the Sultan of Turkey and the Shah of Persia.

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<sup>23</sup> See Chapter II (History)

The first tidings of the Bahá'í Teaching were brought to her in the early days of 1926 when her Majesty was in Bucharest and, owing to personal sorrow, was living in retirement. Martha Root, the best known of the pioneers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, sent her a short note with a copy of Dr. Esslemont's *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. "The Queen accepted the book and was at once so keenly interested by its message that she sat up over it into the small hours, and the next morning she sent an invitation to Martha to visit her in the Palace on the following day at twelve o'clock. So quick and strong was the impression made through that interview that the Queen gave it utterance that same year in many ways public as well as private. She found a ready response to her enthusiasm in her young daughter Ileana, afterwards Archduchess Anton, to whom she taught these truths. She wrote to an American friend of hers in Paris: "I have found all my yearnings for real religion satisfied. ... I am now ready to die any day full of hope; but I pray God not to take me away yet for I still have a lot of work to do."<sup>24</sup>

In May and in September 1926 *The Toronto Daily Star* published from her pen two glowing tributes to the Bahá'í Faith. "It is a wondrous message," she wrote, "that Bahá'u'lláh and His son 'Abdu'l-Bahá have given us. They have not set it up aggressively knowing that the germ of eternal truth which lies at its core cannot but take root and spread. ... I commend it to you all. If ever the name of Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá comes to your attention, do not put their writings from you. Search out their Books, and let their glorious, peace-bringing, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine."

To the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* in September the same year she contributed an article on the Faith in the course of which she testified expressly to her acceptance of the truth of a succession of Revelations, a succession of Prophets—Christ, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh," she wrote; continuing, "those voices (of

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<sup>24</sup> Martha L. Root, "Queen Marie of Rumania," *The Bahá'í World, Volume VI, 1934–1936* (New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1937), p. 580.

God) sent to us had to become flesh so that with our earthly ears we should be able to hear and understand.”

These three articles being syndicated were printed in nearly two hundred American newspapers, and afterwards appeared in several newspapers in the East.<sup>25</sup>

The following is a part of the letter which she wrote to Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, on August 27, 1926:

Indeed a great light came to me with the message of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It came as all great messages come at an hour of dire grief and inner conflict and distress, so the seed sank deeply.

My youngest daughter finds also great strength and comfort in the teachings of the beloved masters.

We pass on the message from month to month and all those we give it to see a light suddenly lighting before them and much that was obscure and perplexing becomes simple, luminous and full of hope as never before.

That my open letter was balm to those suffering for the cause, is indeed a great happiness to me, and I take it as a sign that God accepted my humble tribute.

The occasion given me to be able to express myself publicly, was also His Work—for indeed it was a chain of circumstances of which each link led me unwittingly one step further, till suddenly all was clear before my eyes and I understood why it had been.

Thus does He lead us finally to our ultimate destiny.

Some of those of my caste wonder at and disapprove my courage to step forward pronouncing words not habitual for Crowned Heads to pronounce, but I advance

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<sup>25</sup> *The Bahá'í World, Volume VIII, 1938–1940* (New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1942), p. 273.

by an inner urge I cannot resist. With bowed head I recognize that I too am but an instrument in greater Hands and rejoice in the knowledge.

Little by little the veil is lifting, grief tore it in two. And grief was also a step leading me ever nearer truth, therefore do I not cry out against grief!

May you and those beneath your guidance be blessed and upheld by the sacred strength of those gone before you.

Marie

[*The Bahá'í World, Volume VIII, 1938–1940* (New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1942), pp. 273–274.]

In the following year (1927) her Majesty gave another audience to Martha Root; a third audience in 1928 when with her daughter the Princess Ileana she was the guest of the Queen of Yugoslavia in Belgrade; and a fourth in 1929 in the Summer Palace at Balcic. She contributed an encomium of the Cause, charged with warm feeling and beautifully expressed, to the fourth volume of the Bahá'í World; and another more brief but not less significant to the fifth volume. “The Bahá'í Teaching,” she wrote, “brings peace to the soul and hope to the heart. To those in search of assurance the words of the Father are as a fountain in the desert after long wandering.”

[*The Bahá'í World, Volume VIII, 1938–1940* (New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1942), p. 274.]

“One’s busy day may seem too full for religion. Or one may have a religion that satisfies. But the teachings of these gentle, wise and kindly men are compatible with all religion, and with no religion.

Seek them, and be the happier.”

In another article in 1934, she writes:

“The Bahá'í teaching brings peace and understanding.

It is like a wide embrace gathering together all those who have long searched for words of hope.

It accepts all great prophets gone before, it destroys no other creeds and leaves all doors open.

Saddened by the continual strife amongst believers of many confessions and wearied of their intolerance towards each other, I discovered in the Bahá'í teaching the real spirit of Christ so often denied and misunderstood.

Unity instead of strife, hope instead of condemnation, love instead of hate, and a great reassurance for all men.”

[Ibid., p. 274.]

And in another article in 1936, she writes:

“More than ever today when the world is facing such a crisis of bewilderment and unrest, must we stand firm in Faith seeking that which binds together instead of tearing asunder.

To those searching for light, the Bahá'í Teachings offer a star which will lead them to deeper understanding, to assurance, peace and good will with all men.”

It had been for some time her Majesty's wish and aspiration to visit in person the sacred shrines upon Mount Carmel and to meet in person Shoghi Effendi. In the year 1931 the opportunity, as it seemed, arrived. Accompanied by her youngest daughter, her Majesty travelled to the Holy Land and arrived at Haifa with the intention of fulfilling her cherished desire. But fate had ruled otherwise. Unfriendly influences intervened. She did not reach her goal. In a sad letter to Martha Root dated June 28th, 1931, she told of her frustration and of the unwelcome pressure to which she had been subjected. “Both Ileana and I,” she wrote, “were cruelly disappointed at having been prevented going to the holy Shrines and meeting Shoghi Effendi; but at that time we were going through a cruel crisis and every movement I made was being turned against me

and being politically exploited in an unkind way. It caused me a good deal of suffering and curtailed my liberty most unkindly. ... But the beauty of truth remains and I cling to it through all the vicissitudes of a life become rather sad.”

[Ibid., p. 274.]

Early in 1934 her Majesty again received Martha Root in audience in the Controceni Palace in Bucharest and expressed her delight that the Rumanian translation of *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* had just been published in Bucharest and that her people were to have the blessing of reading this precious Teaching.

[Ibid., p. 274.]

Later on, many troubles befell her:

After some months of illness, in July, 1938 she passed away. ...

The Guardian of the Cause and the Bahá'ís generally recognized the distinction of her spiritual station and the greatness of her service to the Cause. In July, 1938 the Guardian on behalf of all the Bahá'ís sent a message of condolence to her daughter the Queen of Yugoslavia.

[Ibid., p. 275.]

**BY PROFESSOR E.G. BROWNE**<sup>26</sup> (*A Traveller's Narrative*, page 309)

The appearance of such a woman as Qurratu'l-'Ayn<sup>27</sup> is in any country and any age a rare phenomenon, but in such a country as Persia it is a prodigy—nay, almost a miracle. Alike in virtue of her marvelous beauty, her rare intellectual gifts, her fervid eloquence, her fearless devotion and her glorious martyrdom, she stands forth incomparable and immortal amongst her countrywomen. Had

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<sup>26</sup> Prof. E.G. Browne, A.A., A.B., Cambridge University.

<sup>27</sup> She was among the Bab's 18 disciples and was martyred in 1851.

the Babi<sup>28</sup> religion no other claim to greatness, this were sufficient—that it produced a heroine like Qurratu'l-'Ayn. [E.G Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 309.]

In the Introduction to *A Traveller's Narrative* (pp. xxxix–xl), Prof. Browne gives an account about when he received an audience with Bahá'u'lláh:

Though I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the corner where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt head-dress of the kind called 'taj' by dervishes (but of unusual height and make), round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet-black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!

A mild dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued:—"Praise be to God that thou has attained! ... Thou has come to see a prisoner and an exile. ... We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition 40 worthy of bondage and banishment. ... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this? ... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall

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<sup>28</sup> The Bab was the herald of Bahá'u'lláh and his followers were Babis.

come. ... Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold? ... Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind. ... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family. ... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind. ...”

Such, so far as I can recall them, were the words which, besides many others, I heard from Behá. Let those who read them consider well with themselves whether such doctrines merit death and bonds, and whether the world is more likely gain or lose by their diffusion.

—Introduction to *A Traveller’s Narrative (Episode of the Báb)*, pp. xxxix–xl.

**BY SIR VALENTINE CHIROL**<sup>29</sup>

Socially one of the most interesting features of Babiism is the raising of woman to a much higher plane than she is usually admitted to in the East. The Báb himself had no more devoted a disciple than the beautiful and gifted lady, known as Qurratu’l-‘Ayn, the “Consolation of the Eyes,” who, having shared all the dangers of the first apostolic missions in the north, challenged and suffered death with virile fortitude, as one of the Seven Martyrs of Tihiran. No memory is more deeply venerated or kindles greater enthusiasm than hers, and the influence which she wielded in her lifetime still inures to her sex. [Qtd. in *The Bahá’í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 21.]

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<sup>29</sup> *The Middle Eastern Question or Some Political Problems of Indian Defense*, Chapter XI, p. 124. [Qtd. in *The Bahá’í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 21.]

**BY PROFESSOR JOWETT OF OXFORD**<sup>30</sup>

Prof. Jowett of Oxford, Master of Balliol, the translator of Plato, studied the movement and was so impressed thereby that he said: “The Babite [Bahá’í] movement may not impossibly turn out to have the promise of the future.”

Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter quotes Prof. Edward Caird, Prof. Jowett’s successor as Master of Balliol, as saying, “He thought Babiism (as the Bahá’í movement was then called) might prove the most important religious movement since the foundation of Christianity.” Prof. Carpenter himself gives a sketch of the Bahá’í movement in his recent book on *Comparative Religions* and asks, “Has Persia, in the midst of her miseries, given birth to a religion that will go around the world?”

**BY ALFRED W. MARTIN**<sup>31</sup>

Inasmuch as a fellowship of faiths is at once the dearest hope and ultimate goal of the Bahá’í movement, it behooves us to take cognizance of it and its mission. ... Today this religious movement has a million and more adherents, including people from all parts of the globe and representing a remarkable variety of race, color, class and creed. It has been given literary expression in a veritable library of Asiatic, European, and American works to which additions are annually made as the movement grows and grapples with the great problems that grow out of its cardinal teachings. It has a long roll of martyrs for the cause for which it stands, twenty thousand in Persia alone, proving it to be a movement worth dying for as well as worth living by.

From its inception it has been identified with Bahá’u’lláh, who paid the price of prolonged exile, imprisonment, bodily suffering, and mental anguish for the

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<sup>30</sup> *Heroic Lives*, p. 305. [Qtd. in *The Bahá’í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 22.]

<sup>31</sup> Excerpts from *Comparative Religion and the Religion of the Future*, pp. 81–91. [Qtd. in *The Bahá’í World*, Vol. VIII, pp. 22–23.]

faith he cherished—a man of imposing personality as revealed in his writings, characterized by intense moral earnestness and profound spirituality, gifted with the self same power so conspicuous in the character of Jesus, the power to appreciate people ideally, that is, to see them at the level of their best and to make even the lowest types think well of themselves because of potentialities within them to which he pointed, but of which they were wholly unaware; a prophet whose greatest contribution was not any specific doctrine he proclaimed, but an informing spiritual power breathed into the world through the example of his life and thereby quickening souls into new spiritual activity. Surely a movement of which all this can be said deserves—nay, compels—our respectful recognition and sincere appreciation.

Taking precedence over all else in its gospel is the message of unity in religion. ... It is the crowning glory of the Bahá'í movement that, while deprecating sectarianism in its preaching, it has faithfully practiced what it preached by refraining from becoming itself a sect. ... Its representatives do not attempt to impose any beliefs upon others, whether by argument or bribery; rather do they seek to put beliefs that have illumined their own lives within the reach of those who feel they need illumination. No, not a sect, not a part of humanity cut off from all the rest, living for itself and aiming to convert all the rest into material for its own growth; no, not that, but a leaven, causing spiritual fermentation in all religions quickening them with the spirit of catholicity and fraternalism.

Who shall say but that just as the little company of the Mayflower, landing on Plymouth Rock, proved to be the small beginning of a mighty nation, the ideal germ of a democracy which, if true to its principles, shall yet overspread the habitable globe, so the little company of Bahá'ís exiled from their Persian home may yet prove to be the small beginning of the world-wide movement, the ideal germ of democracy in religion, the Universal Church of Mankind?

BY CHARLES BAUDOIN<sup>32</sup>

The Bahá'íst ethical code is dominated by the law of love taught by Jesus and by all the prophets. In the thousand and one details of practical life, this law is subject to manifold interpretations. That of Bahá'u'lláh is unquestionably one of the most comprehensive of these, one of the most exalted, one of the most satisfactory to the modern mind. ...

That is why Bahá'u'lláh is a severe critic of the patriotism which plays so large a part in the national life of our day. Love of our native land is legitimate, but this love must not be exclusive. A man should love his country more than he loves his house (this is the dogma held by every patriot); but Bahá'u'lláh adds that he should love the divine world more than he loves his country. From this standpoint, patriotism is seen to be an intermediate stage on the road of renunciation, an incomplete and hybrid religion, something we have to get beyond. Throughout his life Bahá'u'lláh regarded the ideal universal peace as one of the most important of his aims. ...

Bahá'u'lláh is in this respect enunciating a novel and fruitful idea. There is a better way of dealing with social evils than by trying to cure them after they have come to pass. We should try to prevent them by removing their causes, which act on the individual, and especially on the child.

Nothing can be more plastic than the nature of the child. The government's first duty must be to provide for the careful and efficient education of children, remembering that education is something more than instruction. This will be an enormous step towards the solution of the social problem, and to take such a step will be the first task of the Baytu'l-'Adl (House of Justice). "It is ordained upon every father to rear his son or his daughter by means of the sciences, the arts, and all the commandments; and if any one should neglect to do so, then the members of the council, should the offender be a wealthy man, must levy

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<sup>32</sup> Excerpts from *Contemporary Studies*, Part III (London: Allen & Unwin, 1924), p. 131. [Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, pp. 25–27.]

from him the sum necessary for the education of his child. When the neglectful parent is poor, the cost of the necessary education must be borne by the council, which will provide a refuge for the unfortunate.”

The Baytu'l-'Adl, likewise, must prepare the way for the establishment of universal peace, doing this by organizing courts of arbitration and by influencing the governments. Long before the Esperantists had begun their campaign, and more than twenty years before Nicholas II had summoned the first Hague congress, Bahá'u'lláh was insisting on the need for a universal language and courts of arbitration. He returns to these matters again and again: “Let all the nations become one in faith, and let all men be brothers, in order that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men may be strengthened. ... What harm can there be in that? ... It is going to happen. There will be an end to sterile conflicts, to ruinous wars; and the Great Peace will come!” Such were the words of Bahá'u'lláh in 1890, two years before his death.

While adopting and developing the Christian law of love, Bahá'u'lláh rejected the Christian principle of asceticism. He discountenanced the machinations which were a nightmare of the Middle Ages, and whose evil effects persist even in our own days. ...

Bahá'ism, then, is an ethical system, a system of social morality. But it would be a mistake to regard Bahá'ist teaching as a collection of abstract rules imposed from without. Bahá'ism is permeated with a sane and noble mysticism; nothing could be more firmly rooted in the inner life, more benignly spiritual; nothing could speak more intimately to the soul, in low tones, and as if from within.

## BY SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

[1] Excerpts from *The Gleam* (1923):

The story of the Báb, as Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad called himself, was the story of spiritual heroism unsurpassed in Svabhava's experience; and his own adventurous soul was fired by it. That a youth of no social influence and no education should, by the simple power of insight, be able to pierce into the heart of things and see the real truth, and then hold on to it with such firmness of conviction and present it with such suasion that he was able to convince men that he was the Messiah and get them to follow him to death itself, was one of those splendid facts in human history that Svabhava loved to meditate on. This was a true hero whom he would wish to emulate and whose experiences he would profit by. The Báb's passionate sincerity could not be doubted, for he had given his life for his faith. And that there must be something in his message that appealed to men and satisfied their souls, was witnessed to by the fact that thousands gave their lives in his cause and millions now follow him.

If a young man could, in only six years of ministry, by the sincerity of his purpose and the attraction of his personality, so inspire rich and poor, cultured and illiterate, alike, with belief in himself and his doctrines that they would remain staunch, though hunted down and without trial sentenced to death, sawn asunder, strangled, shot, blown from guns and if men of high position and culture in Persia, Turkey and Egypt in numbers to this day adhere to his doctrines, his life must be one of those events in the last hundred years which is really worth study. And that study fortunately has been made by the Frenchman Gobineau and by Professor E.G. Browne, so that we are able to have a faithful representation of its main features. ... Thus, in only his thirtieth year, in the year 1850, ended the heroic career of a true God-man. Of the sincerity of his conviction that he was God-appointed, the manner of his death is the amplest possible proof. In the belief that he would thereby save others from the error of their present beliefs he willingly sacrificed his life. And of his power of attaching

men to him, the passionate devotion of hundreds and even thousands of men who gave their lives in his cause is convincing testimony. ...

He himself was but “a letter out of that most mighty book, a dewdrop from that limitless ocean.” The One to come would reveal all mysteries and all riddles. This was the humility of true insight. And it has had its effect. His movement has grown and expanded, and it has yet a great future before it.

During his six years of ministry, four of which were spent in captivity, he had permeated all Persia with his ideas. And since his death the movement has spread to Turkey, Egypt, India and even into Europe and America. His adherents are now numbered by millions. “The Spirit which pervades them,” says Professor Browne, “is such that it cannot fail to affect most powerfully all subject to its influence.”

[2] For many years I have been interested in the rise and progress of the Bahá’í Movement. Its roots go deep down into the past and yet it looks far forward into the future. It realizes and preaches the oneness of mankind. And I have noticed how ardently its followers work for the furtherance of peace and for the general welfare of mankind. God must be with them and their success therefore assured.

(Excerpts from *Modern Mystic* (1935) p. 142. Qtd. in *The Bahá’í World*, Vol. VIII, pp. 30–31.)

### **EXCERPT FROM THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH**<sup>33</sup>

‘Abdu’l-Bahá addressed a large and deeply interested audience at Manchester College, Oxford, on December 31. The Persian leader spoke in his native tongue, Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab interpreting. Principal Estlin Carpenter presided, and introduced the speaker by saying that they owed the honor and pleasure of meeting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to their revered friend, Dr. Cheyne, who was deeply

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<sup>33</sup> January 22, 1913: “‘Abdu’l-Bahá at Oxford.” [Qtd. in *The Bahá’í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 32.]

interested in Bahá'í teaching. The movement sprung up during the middle of the last century in Persia, with the advent of a young Muhammadan who took to himself the title of the Báb (meaning door or gate, through which men could arrive at the knowledge or truth of God), and who commenced teaching in Persia in the year 1844. The purity of his character, the nobility of his words, aroused great enthusiasm. He was, however, subjected to great hostility by the authorities, who secured his arrest and imprisonment, and he was finally executed in 1850. But the movement went on, and the writings of the Báb, which had been copious, were widely read. The movement has been brought into India, Europe, and the United States. It does not seek to create a new sect, but to inspire all sects with a deep fundamental love. The late Dr. Jowett once said to him that he had been so deeply impressed with the teachings and character of the Báb that he thought Babiism, as the present movement was then known, might become the greatest religious movement since the birth of Christ.

#### **BY LEO TOLSTOY**

I have known about the Bábís for a long time, and have always been interested in their teachings. ...

Therefore, the teachings of the Bábís, inasmuch as they have rejected the old Muhammadan superstitions and have not established new superstitions which would divide them from other new superstitions. ...

The teachings of the Bábís which come to us out of Islam have through Bahá'u'lláh's teachings been gradually developed and now present us with the highest and purest form of religious teaching.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Translated from a letter to Mme. Isabel Grinevskaya, Oct. 22, 1903.

We spend our lives trying to unlock the mystery of the universe, but there was a Turkish prisoner [Bahá'u'lláh in Akká, Palestine] who had the key.<sup>35</sup>

**BY PROF. HERBERT A. MILLER IN WORLD UNITY MAGAZINE**

The central drive of the Bahá'í Movement is for human unity. It would secure this through unprejudiced search for truth, making religion conform to scientific discovery and insisting that fundamentally all religions are alike. For the coming of universal peace, there is great foresight and wisdom as to details. Among other things there should be a universal language, so the Bahá'ís take a great interest in Esperanto though they do not insist on it as the ultimate language. No other religious movement has put so much emphasis on the emancipation and education of women. Everyone should work whether rich or poor and poverty should be abolished. ... What will be the course of the Bahá'í Movement no one can prophesy, but I think it is no exaggeration to claim that the program is the finest fruit of the religious contribution of Asia.

Shoghi Effendi's<sup>36</sup> statement cannot be improved upon. The Bahá'ís have had the soundest position on the race question of any religion. They not only accept the scientific conclusions but they also implement them with spiritual force. This latter is necessary because there is no other way to overcome the emotional element which is basic in the race problem. ...

I have not said enough perhaps in the first paragraph. Please add the following: The task of learning to live together, though different, is the most difficult and the most imperative that the world faces. The economic problem will be relatively easy in comparison. There are differences in the qualities of cultures but there are no differences in qualities of races that correspond. This being recognized by minorities leads them to resist methods of force to keep them in

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<sup>35</sup> Qtd. from *Star of the West*, Vol. XXIII, p. 233 (USA).

<sup>36</sup> *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith* (1921–1957). See Chapter II.

subordination. There is no solution except cooperation and the granting of self-respect. [Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, pp. 41–42.]

**BY VISCOUNT SAMUEL, G.C.B., M.P.** <sup>37</sup>

It is possible indeed to pick out points of fundamental agreement among all creeds. That is the essential purpose of the Bahá'í Religion, the foundation and growth of which is one of the most striking movements that have proceeded from the East in recent generations.

If one were compelled to choose which of the many religious communities of the world was closest to the aim and purpose of this Congress, I think one would be obliged to say that it was the comparatively little known Bahá'í Community. Other faiths and creeds have to consider, at a Congress like this, in what way they can contribute to the idea of world fellowship. But the Bahá'í Faith exists almost for the sole purpose of contributing to the fellowship and the unity of mankind.

Other communities may consider how far a particular element of their respective faith may be regarded as similar to those of other communities, but the Bahá'í Faith exists for the purpose of combining in one synthesis all those elements in the various faiths which are held in common. And that is why I suggest that this Bahá'í community is really more in agreement with the main idea which has led to the summoning of the Congress than any particular one of the great religious communities of the world.

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<sup>37</sup> In *John O'London's Weekly*, March 25, 1933. [Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 42.]

**BY LORD SAMUEL OP CARMEL, G.C.B., C.B.E.**

In 1920 I was appointed as the first High Commissioner for Palestine under the British Mandate, and took an early opportunity of paying a visit to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Effendi at his home in Haifa.

I had for some time been interested in the Bahá’í Movement, and felt privileged by the opportunity of making the acquaintance of its head. ...

I was impressed, as was every visitor, by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s dignity, grace and charm. Of moderate stature, his strong features and lofty expression lent to his personality an appearance of majesty. In our conversation he readily explained and discussed the principal tenets of Bahá’í, answered my inquiries and listened to my comments. ...

I was glad I had paid my visit so soon, for in 1921 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá died. I was only able to express my respect for his creed and my regard for his person by coming from the capital to attend his funeral. A great throng had gathered together, sorrowing for his death, but rejoicing also for his life.<sup>38</sup>

**SPEECH BY REV. GRIFFITH J. SPARHAM**

(In Highgate Hill Unitarian Christian Church, London, England)

In his book, *A League of Religions*, the Rev. J. Tyssul Davis, formerly minister of the Theistic Church in London, and at present minister of a Unitarian Church in Bristol, England, the writer sets out to demonstrate that each great religious movement in the world has contributed something of peculiar importance to the spiritual life of man. Thus, he says, the great contribution of Zoroastrianism has been the thought of Purity; of Brahmanism that of Justice; of Muhammadanism that of Submission; of Christianity that of Service; and so on. In each instance he lays his finger on the one thing *par excellence* for which the particular religious

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<sup>38</sup> Qtd. in *The Bahá’í World*, Vol. VIII, pp. 43–44.

culture seemed to him to stand, and tries to catch its special contribution in an epigrammatic phrase. Coming, in this way, to Bahá'ism, he names it "the Religion of Reconciliation." In his chapter on Bahá'ism he says:

"The Bahá'í religion has made its way because it meets the need of the day. It fits the larger outlook of our time, better than the rigid older faiths. A characteristic is its unexpected liberality and toleration. It accepts all the great religions as true and their scriptures as inspired."

These, then, as he sees Bahá'ism, are its essential features: liberality, toleration, the spirit of reconciliation; and that, not in the sense, as Mr. H. G. Wells has it in his *Soul of a Bishop*, of making a "collection" of approved portions of the world's varied and differing creeds, but in the sense, as he also puts it in the same book, of achieving a great "simplification."

"Bahá'ists," says Dr. Davis, "bid the followers of these (that is, the world's) faiths disentangle from the windings of racial, particularist, local prejudices, the vital, immortal thread of the pure gospel of eternal worth, and to apply this essential element to life."

That is Dr. Davis's interpretation of the genius of Bahá'ism, and that it is a true one, no one who has studied Bahá'ism, even superficially, can question, least of all the outsider. Indeed one may go further and assert that no one who has studied Bahá'ism, whether superficially or otherwise, would wish to question it; particularly if he approaches the subject from a liberal and unprejudiced point of view. In the last act of his "Wandering Jew," Mr. Temple Thurston puts into the mouth of Matteos, the Wandering Jew himself, the splendid line, "All men are Christians—all are Jews." He might equally well have written, "All men are Christians—all are Bahá'ís." For, if the sense of the Unity of Truth is a predominant characteristic of liberally-minded people, whatever may be their religious tradition, it is predominantly a characteristic of Bahá'ism; since here is a religious system based, fundamentally, on the one, simple, profound,

comprehensive doctrine of the unity of God, which carries with it, as its necessary corollary and consequence, the parallel doctrine of the unity of Man.

This, at all events, is the conviction of the present writer; and it is why, as a Unitarian, building his own faith on the same basic principles of divine and human unity, he has long felt sympathy with and good will toward a religious culture which stands on a foundation identical with that of the faith he holds. And a religion that affirms the unity of things must of necessity be a religion of reconciliation; the truth of which in the case of Bahá'ism is clear.

### **BY MISS HELEN KELLER**

The philosophy of Bahá'u'lláh deserves the best thought we can give it. I am returning the book so that other blind people who have more leisure than myself may be “shown a ray of Divinity” and their hearts be “bathed in an inundation of eternal love.”

I take this opportunity to thank you for your kind thought of me, and for the inspiration which even the most cursory reading of Bahá'u'lláh's life cannot fail to impart. What nobler theme than the “good of the world and the happiness of the nations” can occupy our lives? The message of universal peace will surely prevail. It is useless to combine or conspire against an idea which has in it potency to create a new earth and a new heaven and to quicken human beings with a holy passion of service.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> In a personal letter written to an American Bahá'í after having read something from the Braille edition of *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. [Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 55.]

**BY DR. ROKUICHIRO MASUJIMA**

The Japanese race is of rational mind. No superstition can play with it. Japan is the only country in the world where religious tolerance has always existed. The Japanese Emperor is the patron of all religious teachings. The Bahá'í publications now form part of His Majesty's Library as accepted by the Imperial House. ...

The search for truth and universal education inculcated by the Bahá'í Teachings, if soundly conducted, cannot fail to interest the Japanese mind. Bahá'ism is bound to permeate the Japanese race in a short time. [Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 54.]

**BY SIR FLINDERS PETRIE**

The Bahá'í Movement of Persia should be a welcome adjunct to true Christianity; we must always remember how artificial the growth of Latin Christian ideas has been as compared with the wide and less defined beliefs native to early Christian faith. (In a letter to the *Daily Sketch*, London, England, December 16, 1932. Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 55.)

**BY FORMER PRESIDENT MASARYK OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

Continue to do what you are doing, spread these principles of humanity and do not wait for the diplomats. Diplomats alone cannot bring the peace, but it is a great thing that official people begin to speak about these universal peace principles. Take these principles to the diplomats, to the universities and colleges and other schools, and also write about them. It is the people who will bring the universal peace. (In an audience with an American Bahá'í journalist in Praha, in 1928. Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 55.)

**BY ARCHDUCHESS ANTON OF AUSTRIA**

Archduchess Anton of Austria, who before her marriage was Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana of Rumania, in an audience with Martha L. Root, June 19, 1934, in Vienna, gave the following statement for *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. V:

“I like the Bahá'í Movement, because it reconciles all Faiths, and teaches that science is from God as well as religion, and its ideal is peace.”<sup>40</sup>

**BY DR. HERBERT ADAMS GIBBONS** (American Historian)

I have had on my desk, and have read several times, the three extracts from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Message of Social Regeneration. Taken together, they form an unanswerable argument and plea for the only way that the world can be made over. If we could put into effect this program, we should indeed have a new world order:

“The morals of humanity must undergo change. New remedy and solution for human problems must be adopted. Human intellects themselves must change and be subject to the universal reformation.” In these three sentences we really have it all.<sup>41</sup>

**BY PROF. DR. V. LENSY**

The conditions are so changed now, since the technique of the present time has destroyed the barriers between nations, that the world needs a uniting force, a kind of super-religion. I think Bahá'ism could develop to such a kind of religion. I am quite convinced of it, so far as I know the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. ...

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<sup>40</sup> Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 56.

<sup>41</sup> Excerpt from personal letter dated May 18, 1934. [Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 56.]

There are modern saviors and Bahá'u'lláh is a Savior of the twentieth century. Everything must be done on a democratic basis, there must be international brotherhood. We must learn to have confidence in ourselves and then in others. One way to learn this is through inner spiritual education, and a way to attain such an education may be through Bahá'ism.

I am still of the opinion that I had four years ago that the Bahá'í Movement can form the best basis for international goodwill, and that Bahá'u'lláh Himself is the Creator of an eternal bond between the East and the West. ... The Bahá'í Teaching is a living religion, a living philosophy. ...

I do not blame Christianity, it has done a good work for culture in Europe, but there are too many dogmas in Christianity at the present time. ... Buddhism was very good for India from the sixth century B.C. and the Teachings of Christ have been good for the whole world; but as there is a progress of mind there must be no stopping and in the Bahá'í Faith one sees the continued progress of religion.<sup>42</sup>

### **BY PRESIDENT EDUARD BENES**

I have followed it (the Bahá'í Cause) with deep interest ever since my trip to London to the First Races Congress in July, 1911, when I heard for the first time of the Bahá'í Movement and its summary of the principles for peace. I followed it during the war and after the war. The Bahá'í Teaching is one of the spiritual forces now absolutely necessary to put the spirit first in this battle against material forces. ... The Bahá'í Teaching is one of the great instruments for the final victory of the spirit and of humanity. ...

The Bahá'í Cause is one of the great moral and social forces in all the world today. I am more convinced than ever, with the increasing moral and political

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<sup>42</sup> Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, pp. 57–58.

crises in the world, we must have greater international co-ordination. Such a movement as the Bahá'í Cause which paves the way for universal organization of peace is necessary.<sup>43</sup>

## **BY COL. RAJA JAI PRITHVI BAHADUR SINGH**

### **Raja of Bajang (Nepal)**

Even as early as 1929 or perhaps even a little earlier, I used to hear the names of Bahá'u'lláh and Bahá'ism; and in 1929, when I undertook a lecturing tour in Europe on the humanistic methods of promoting peace and unity among races, nations and individuals my attention was once again drawn to Bahá'u'lláh and his teachings by my friend Lady Blomfield, who gave me some books too on the subject. ...

When afterwards, in 1933, the Second Parliament of Religions or the World Fellowship of Faiths was held in Chicago, a conference inspired by the high ideals of mutual understanding, good-will, co-operation and peace and progress, and I went there to attend and participate in the conference, my attention was again drawn to the Bahá'í Faith by some of its followers there. ...

Later, in 1936, however, while I was in Rangoon, I had an opportunity-rather, the opportunity was thrust upon me-to acquaint myself more fully with the tenets and teachings of Bahá'ism. Mr. S. Schopflocher, a Bahá'í from Canada, who was on a lecturing tour, was then in Rangoon, and I was asked to introduce him to the public and to preside over a lecture of his. Therefore I secured a few books on the subject, and on reading them, I was struck with the remarkable fact that Bahá'ism is a faith, which not merely recognises the respective merits of the world religions, but goes a step further and teaches that all religions are One, all the religious seers, saints and prophets are the religious seers, saints

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<sup>43</sup> Qtd. in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 62.

and prophets of One religion only, that all mankind is One, and that we must think and feel and act in terms of brotherhood. “We must realise,” as a Bahá’í very beautifully puts it, “that, as the aeroplane, radio and other instruments have crossed the frontiers drawn upon the map, so our sympathy and spirit of one-ness should rise above the influences that have separated race from race, class from class, nation from nation and creed from creed. One destiny now controls all human affairs. The fact of world-unity stands out above all other interests and considerations.” ...

I rather think that by accepting these main principles of Bahá’ism they will help in hastening the establishment of a New World Order, an idea perhaps first clearly conceived by Bahá’u’lláh and which every thinking man will now endorse as a “consummation to be devoutly wished for.”<sup>44</sup>

**BY ARCHIE J. BAHM<sup>45</sup>**

Bahá’í teachings have a wide appeal, especially when viewed as pervasive principles and considered apart from the historical particulars of the movement. Twelve ideals are upheld as basic: “(1) The oneness of mankind. (2) Independent investigation of truth. (3) The foundation of all religions is one. (4) Religion must be the cause of unity. (5) Religion must be in accord with science and reason. (6) Equality between men and women. (7) Prejudice of all kinds must be forgotten. (8) Universal peace. (9) Universal education. (10) Spiritual solution of the economic problem. (11) A universal language. (12) An international tribunal.” Who can fail to join in praising all or most of these ideals? “They imply establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes will be closely and permanently united, in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of

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<sup>44</sup> Qtd. in *The Bahá’í World*, Vol. VIII, pp. 63–65.

<sup>45</sup> Archie J. Bahm is professor of philosophy and comparative religion at the University of New Mexico.

individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must ... consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all component nations, and will enact such laws as will be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples.” (Shoghi Effendi, excerpt from a letter dated March 11, 1936.) Focal center of some ten thousand Bahá’ís in the United States is the Bahá’í Temple erected in Wilmette, Illinois, by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada. In 1962 Bahá’ís claimed their teachings had already taken root in two hundred and sixty countries.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Archie J. Bahm, *The World's Living Religions* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 333–334.

## CHAPTER IV

### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS

First I want to point out the very important point in Bahá'í teachings which says that human beings—even though in many aspects are similar to other animals (i.e. in their natural instincts)—but, in another aspect, human beings have a special quality which is the human spirit which aspect educates man spiritually—that is to be kind, to be just, and be a good person. Unfortunately some negative ideas of materialists have been praised, without full consideration. For example, Marx reflected an inferiority complex in his prejudiced ideas:

Among the most unattractive features of Marx is the profusion of deprecating references to Jews and Jewishness that are to be found in his letters, such as expressions as: “There are many jews and fleas here.”<sup>47</sup>

The philosophers of the Enlightenment, which Marx fashions his doctrine partly out, of believe:

Man has no divine soul, that he is an object in nature, but he has the capacity for self-improvement through education and environmental changes.<sup>48</sup>

I don't mean to put these scholars and their ideas down. All I want to say is this: let's use our own reason and judgement as we saw the above philosophers of the Enlightenment who believed that humans have no divine soul, and they believed we are objects of nature. How can we accept that we are part of nature with capacities and qualities which nature itself does not have? They deny the divine soul. A cow also denies it—even long before they did. So a cow al so can be considered as enlightened, too.

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<sup>47</sup> Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), pp. 78–79.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

The message of the Bahá'í Faith has opened the minds and hearts to one predominant idea, that mankind is in need of the guidance and leadership of the Divine Teachers—leadership of a quality and level which is above men's power to initiate or create.

This message reveals that Divine Truth, the Cause of God, has had different stages just like the educational process of students, wherein one must obtain certain knowledge in order to advance and understand further, more advanced subjects.

On the foundation of spiritual qualities, each divine teacher has to bring a certain limited amount of instruction; but this does not mean the limitation of the power and knowledge of the Messenger, but that he is similar to a doctor who has to treat and give medication appropriate to the sickness and needs of the patient, in spite of the fact that he knows of many other medications, drugs or methods. The content of the instruction is limited by the capacity and understanding of the learner, and not the knowledge of the educator.

As it is impossible to teach atomic physics and computer science to children who are beginning elementary education, the same holds with Moses, who could not talk or teach about the unity of mankind.

It was not necessary while people of one region and town hardly knew anything about people of the next town or other settlements. What was essential and crucial for the Jews and the nation of Israel was unity among themselves. This tribal unity was through the guidance and leadership of Moses and reached to such a stage of progress that researchers and scholars from Greece would approach Jewish scholars to learn at their feet. [As John Ferraby explains:]

The revelation of each of the Divine Educators causes mankind to progress. Through them humanity is enabled to advance along the path ordained by God. ... The progress of the human race, both spiritual and material, results from and depends directly upon the potency of the revelations of the Manifestations of God. Although towards the end of a Dispensation, the fire of the love of God

ceases to burn in the hearts of men—so that their actions belie the belief they profess in the teachings of the founder of their religion—nevertheless their spiritual capacity is greater than that of the sincere of former dispensations.<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, it is clear to see Divine Teachers all have had equal prophetic missions. For this reason they each promised their return and future revelations of the will of God.

Their promise of a return would not be a physical and material return but rather the return of their revelation, the return of the consciousness and conviction that helps people of the new era with their capacity to understand and meet their new needs. But sadly, the negligence of the people who ignore the new Messenger has always existed. People expected the physical return and missed the establishing source of love, truth and laws, brought by the Messenger of the Creator, who walked among men for the renewal of the spiritual life.

Mankind in this day of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is capable of greater things than in any previous age. All that the Prophets of the past have revealed, all that the saints and martyrs have achieved, all that those who came close to God longed for, is finding its fruition in this great day.<sup>50</sup>

Now we say the Manifestation has returned to earth for the renewal of spiritual life, but it is not fanaticism or antagonism, for in the words of Bahá'u'lláh we find the cause, the courage, and the meaning of life and nature.

“All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization,” according to Bahá'u'lláh.

I intend briefly to consider the principles of the Bahá'í Faith and to communicate these principles to conscientious minds for deliberation and recognition. I will indicate the principles of Bahá'u'lláh, and describe the administrative order which governs the

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<sup>49</sup> John Ferraby, *All Things Made New* (New Delhi, India: Bahá'í Publishing, 1975), pp. 46–48.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

Bahá'í community over the earth, and mention the plans and activities of this order and their social contributions in the future.

## UNIVERSAL PEACE

In this great age of the maturity of mankind, the very important fact of spiritual truth has been revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

Bahá'u'lláh has caused the end of those theories, policies and false doctrines which lead to chaos and tribulation. In his writings and Tablets addressed to the kings<sup>51</sup> and heads of governments, He commented to them to form assemblies to resolve their differences and disputes instead of making heavy expenditures on armaments and endangering the nations, inhabitants and citizens.

It has been emphasized by Bahá'u'lláh that rule by this means will end in chaos and ultimately collapse and lead to self-destruction.

Bahá'u'lláh has fundamentally given all the guidance for the establishment of world peace and security, and has stated that peace in the world will be fulfilled in two stages: the Lesser Peace which will begin by 2000 A.D., and the Most Great Peace, which will be organized in the Golden Era of Bahá'í Faith

If the universal peace was to be achieved through conferences and assemblies, we would have it by now, because many of them have been convened already. We should remember just arranging a conference in the name of peace is not enough, especially if there are doubts about the purity of peoples intentions.

While the original motivations behind the Hague conference were questionable (it has been alleged that the Czar was actuated less by sincere desire to promote

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<sup>51</sup> See Chapter II.

peace than by worry about Russians financial disadvantage in the armament competition.<sup>52</sup>

When the sincerity of motivations are in doubt, those persons who are going to represent their countries won't be peace-makers:

Sitting around a conference table does not transform selfish nationalists and arrogant power politicians into a collegium of world-minded, justice-oriented statesmen of humanity.<sup>53</sup>

I have to emphasize again that without changing the conscience of the people we cannot achieve world peace.

Let's see what was the idea of one very famous statesman in the world, Sir. W. Churchill, about peace. "When the advance of destructive weapons enables every one to kill everybody else, nobody will want to kill anyone at all."<sup>54</sup>

Of course, Bahá'ís believe that this has already been shown not to be true, but rather the true way to peace is through a change in men's hearts and motives.

## **ONENESS OF MANKIND**

A fundamental teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the oneness of the world of humanity. Belief in this essential reality is a necessity of the Faith, as certainly, without oneness of freedom, oneness of religion, oneness of citizenship, equality of the sexes and oneness of language, establishing a universal peace is impossible.

Today's world, due to inventions and easy communication, is like a home and therefore peace and tranquility cannot be achieved while there is ignorance or

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<sup>52</sup> Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Swords into Plowshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization* (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 24.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 265 (quoting Winston Churchill).

discrimination. In other words, humanity in this time has to seek and accept measures of unity, as war and strife cannot bring any solution and the presence of sophisticated weapons merely threatens the destruction of civilization on earth:

Whether or not we obey the religious injunction to behave like brothers, or attain the ethical objective of a peaceful world community, we human beings cannot escape the hard fact that all of us are, as John Donne put it, “involved in Mankind.” Given the existence of One World defined as a set of objective conditions, disaster may be the price of failure to achieve One World defined in terms of a moral and political ideal.<sup>55</sup>

If the plans and efforts for peace have been paralyzed, it is because they have neglected the human and spiritual aspects:

Briefly, the weakness of the functionalist argument on problem-solving is that it emphasizes the material aspects of problems and their solutions while while soft-pedaling the human aspects involved.<sup>56</sup>

The Bahá'í Faith teaches us that even though we are different in race, sex, nationality, etc., we should not fight!: “They will forget to fight because they will be ‘too busy with things that matter’.”<sup>57</sup>

## **ELIMINATION OF PREJUDICE OF ALL KINDS**

Prejudices of all kinds, whether religious, racial, national or political, are destructive of the divine foundations of man.

Great numbers of people are the objects of cruelty, oppression and injustice because of their skin color. People are being massacred, imprisoned and banished,

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> James Patrick, *Functionalism and World Politics: A Study Based on United Nations Programs Financing Economic Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 38.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 59 (quoting John Marshall).

guilty only of having a different belief and faith. Nations apparently are at peace, but have vengeance and hatred towards other nations for historical events or previous warfare. This is a dark provision for any spiritual advance or development. The enmity of Persians and Arabs, the awkward feelings of Koreans toward Japanese are undesirably clear examples of this kind of prejudice, a fearful poison, very chronic and harmful. This is not the only side of the problem; but it seems to be still more complicated whenever we see the people of one country and nation differing and discriminating against each other as to their tribes, towns and languages, sometimes leading to separatist desires and internecine bloodshed. Autonomy demands of the Moslems of Mindanao in the Philippines, Basques in Spain, and Ireland in Great Britain are all disgraceful examples in our time.

Prejudices in different ways are burning the world even in the U.S.A., for many points of adoration as a democratic pioneer are crumbling with racial problems: “We have enough trouble keeping 50 states together as well as perhaps 200 large cities with ethnic and racial problems.”<sup>58</sup> “A Negro civilian employee at a nearby air force base was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct because he went to the home of a white co-worker to discuss official business.”<sup>59</sup>

Now how we can eliminate these prejudices which are the obstacles for a healthy life for everyone?: “Cooperation is the key to life and society, neither the individual nor the nation is self-sufficing.”<sup>60</sup>

The aim and direction of Bahá’í Faith is to solve and demolish these negative and critical ideas, replacing them with understanding and love, creating unity in diversity and show how these differences of color and race can contribute to and

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<sup>58</sup> Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, *Nationalism and Its Alternatives* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 35.

<sup>59</sup> Burke Marshall, *Federalism and Civil Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 43.

<sup>60</sup> James Patrick Sewell, *Functionalism and World Politics: A Study Based on United Nations Programs Financing Economic Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 60.

beautify the whole of humanity, as when a conductor leads a group of musicians with different instruments, creating a harmonious and tender melody. By this existing principle, Bahá'u'lláh's teachings can harmonize and draw together feeble and furious humanity to a state of cooperation and love, and get them together at a single table by providing them a meal of unity and brotherhood, animating and unifying them through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

### **EQUALITY OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND WOMAN**

One very important point which has been neglected in the world until now is women's rights. Half of the world's population are women but it seems like the world is only governed by men. When Hitler was planning his Jewish massacre, of course he didn't have any women among his advisors, and surely there were not women who planned Afghanistan's invasion by Russia. Men have dominated the world scene. Even political scholars have not felt this failure probably because almost all of them have been males.

The teachings of the Bahá'í Faith are based on oneness and harmony with a root in the equality of men and women despite their physical differences.

They are of one equal spiritual foundation.

In proclaiming the oneness of mankind He [Bahá'u'lláh] taught that men and women are equal in the sight of God and that there is no distinction to be made between them. The only difference between them now is due to lack of education and training. If woman is given equal opportunity of education, distinction and estimate of inferiority will disappear. The world of humanity has two wings, as it were: One is the female; the other is the male. If one wing be defective, the strong perfect wing will not be capable of flight. The world of humanity has two hands. If one be imperfect, the capable hand is restricted and unable to perform its duties. God is the Creator of mankind. He has endowed both sexes with perfections and intelligence, given them physical members and

organs of sense, without differentiation or distinction as to superiority; therefore, why should woman be considered inferior? ...

Furthermore, the education of women is of greater importance than the education of men, for they are the mothers of the race, and mothers rear the children. The first teachers of children are the mothers. Therefore, they must be capably trained in order to educate both sons and daughters. ...

When all mankind shall receive the same opportunity of education and the equality of men and women be realized, the foundations of war will be utterly destroyed. Without equality this will be impossible because all differences and distinction are conducive to discord and strife. Equality between men and women is conducive to the abolition of warfare for the reason that women will never be willing to sanction it. Mothers will not give their sons as sacrifices upon the battlefield after twenty years of anxiety and loving devotion in rearing them from infancy, no matter what cause they are called upon to defend. There is no doubt that when women obtain equality of rights, war will entirely cease among mankind.<sup>61</sup>

## **INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF TRUTH**

Through the ignorance of the leaders of religious sects, their self-interest and emotional manipulation, they have deviated from and added diverse objectives to the religions which, in the sight of common people, are mistaken as the real religion of its origin. Bahá'u'lláh has emphasized this matter since God has given man the eye of investigation by which he may see and recognize truth, and through the gift of reason he has to investigate independently about the truth. When with no ulterior motives, we try to analyze the routine of religions, we may give thought to what the Pope

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<sup>61</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), pp. 174–175.

published in 1489 as the “Inuentery, or List of Sins”<sup>62</sup> in which he counted liberalism and passion. We can see this list has no relation with the teachings of Christ. In the chaos and conflicts between the Protestants and Catholics, history relates that 900,000 people have been murdered, due mainly to the animal instinct of people who apparently were the followers of Christ who said, “If you are beaten on your left cheek, turn your right cheek.”

It was never taught by Jesus to kill, or to confess sins to a priest.

Furthermore, Jesus never organized an administration to assign priests to convert bread and wine to the flesh and blood of Christ.

Therefore, a little thought gives us the realization that it is only through the vanity and egotism arising from these so-called “religious leaders” who make religions far from reality, detrimental and injurious by their nature.

Study of History discloses in varying degrees the progress caused by the various Manifestations of God. For example, traces are found of a Jewish civilization in Israel after Moses at the time of David and Solomon, of a Buddhist civilization in India and at the time of Asoka, of a Christian civilization in Europe. The best substantiated record, however is of the Muslim civilization that followed Muhammad. When he came, the Arabs were among the most savage people upon earth; no traveller was safe from being sold into slavery and some tribes even considered it virtuous to bury their daughters alive. Yet within a hundred years of his coming, these savages had founded the most advanced civilization the world had yet seen, whose foundation can be traced directly to his teachings. All unbiased historians now agree that the Saracens at the time of the crusades were more civilized than the crusaders; indeed, Muslims used to laugh at the primitive ideas of the European invaders, whom they considered barbarians. Muslim universities were so much admired that the first Christian university, founded in Paris, was founded in imitation of the Muslim universities in Spain.

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<sup>62</sup> Pope Sixtus IV.

Western civilization owes to the Muslim civilization of the Middle Ages no less and perhaps more, than it does to Greece and Rome.<sup>63</sup>

Another divine concern of Bahá'u'lláh is the necessity of Religion for mankind: Man needs guidance and principles to interpret the reality of his own spiritual nature. To denounce the need for such an inspiration and message is like a soldier who says he has patriotism and loyalty and is not in need of a Commander. Essentially, Bahá'u'lláh in his literature expresses the essence of human reality, exemplifies the means of human fellowship and demonstrates his capacity to transform society from the clash of hostile communities to an organic world-embracing structure. Religion must be a reason for fellowship and collaboration, and any thought of oppression and hatred for the sake of loving and sympathizing in religion is not admirable or admissible. Any religious beliefs which might be a cause of separation and antagonism show clearly that not having a religion is more praiseworthy than such a so-called "religion."<sup>64</sup>

Religion must conform to science and reason which is the foundation of all religions, each in its own time and era. It's only the desire of the ministers and the introduction of different objectives which has changed the sense of faith and made it contrary to scientific theories and reason.<sup>65</sup>

Philosophers, calling themselves teachers of mankind, had been able to accomplish the objective of leadership based on the divine theories and with a limited number of followers, but the Manifestations of God (Moses, Christ or Buddha) all came among the common people and their teaching was effective on large groups.

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<sup>63</sup> John Ferraby, *All Things Made New* (New Delhi, India: Bahá'í Publishing, 1975), pp. 44, 47.

<sup>64</sup> RELIGION: from the Greek "LIGIO": to unite hence "RE-LIGIO" (RELIGION) means "that which re-unites"; that which does not re-unite people to themselves, with each other and to God is not "RELIGION."

<sup>65</sup> Given for religion in Bahá'í Faith is: The necessary relations reflected in and originating from the reality of being and nature which is related to the definition for science.

**FUNCTIONING BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION:**  
**LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY**

Among the difficulties in a world government is the one which has been made by K. Deutsch:

Another possibility would be a world government with a broad scope of the responsibilities of government. It would look after money and credit, price levels, inflation and deflation, employment or unemployment, and health, education and welfare. Unfortunately, such a world government would find itself administratively and politically incapable of fulfilling its obligations. At the international level of government that we have in the world today, we do not have the administrative capabilities, the trained manpower, the budgets, or the expert knowledge needed for the task, we could not administer the affairs of the whole world, from India, Africa, and Latin America to the United States, Western Europe and the one-third of mankind living in the communist countries.<sup>66</sup>

Deutsch is right because he does not have a Bahá'í vision and he is not judging the Bahá'í world government. Anyway, the Bahá'í world government which we are talking about won't have the problems which were pointed out to us by Duetsch. First of all, although the Bahá'í Faith believes in a world government, it still strongly insists upon the self-sufficiency of every Bahá'í community. Every locality will have to take care of the local problems and, in the case of an unexpected problem, will refer it to the national authorities. Every national unit will take care of national affairs and, in case of an unexpected subject, will ask the universal authority for help. We should remember that universal government would be strong enough and would have enough manpower and expertise, because uncomputable money, energy, knowledge, and time which is spent in different countries today for heavy armament, large espionage organizations, large-scaled security troops to keep enlightened strata quiet and unwanted

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<sup>66</sup> Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, *Nationalism and Its Alternatives* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 170.

governments in power will disappear. Since money, measures, education and others will be unified, we can expect a very big economizing in those fields which will result in a healthy society. There would be more areas such as police activities against criminals, which would minimize social problems.

Now the Bahá'í administration is working only in Bahá'í communities throughout the world in almost every country and territory in the world, and there would be good manpower and an example for the future functional world society. The Bahá'í administration is organized as follows:

### **LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY**

When the number of Bahá'ís 21 years of age and older in any community reaches nine, they form an assembly. When more than nine adults reside in a community, a voting process takes place and the nine people having the majority of votes are elected as the members of the Assembly.

This assembly will have the provision, responsibility and full jurisdiction over the legal and social affairs of its local Bahá'í community, handling the decisions for all cases as to education, meetings and gatherings; caretaking of the poor, needy and elders; reinforcing spiritual strength of the believers. This assembly is an intermediary between the Local and the National Spiritual Assembly.

It is the duty of every Bahá'í to be cheerfully submissive to every judgment and counsel of this council (Assembly). A Bahá'í election with full liberty and consciousness creates an overwhelming trust and affection for the members of this Assembly and recognizes the whole body as a sacred and abiding source.

The Assembly itself is a unique form of cooperation and relationship, distinguished by its deep sense of consultation and free opinion, and willingly gives up contrary ideas to the decision of the majority which reflects the opinion of the majority of believers.

## **NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY**

The election of the National Spiritual Assembly is conducted through two stages. The procedure for election is to elect nine times a certain number of delegates from all localities, accordingly, and form a National convention, consisting of these elected delegates. They have the right to elect the National Assembly by secret voting, by voting with no candidates and no nominations. The National Spiritual Assembly has the option and is empowered to decide on all matters concerning the national community, such as teaching activities, protection and conservation as well as intermediation between the local assemblies and the Universal House of Justice

## **UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

The Universal House of Justice is the highest administrative body of the Bahá'í world. It is elected periodically every five years by the members of all the National Spiritual Assemblies. The first Universal House of Justice, composed of nine members, was elected in 1963.

The Universal House of Justice meets regularly at the world center of the Bahá'í Faith in Haifa, Israel, and is the supreme authority in the Bahá'í world. All assemblies and individual believers give it complete obedience, devotion and respect, in accordance with Bahá'u'lláh's explicit written instructions to do so. This world center conducts deliberations on all problems and questions and stays closely informed on the developments of the Faith throughout the world.

## **BAHA'I ELECTIONS**

During the last centuries, most absolute dictatorships have been replaced by so-called democracies in the East or the West. The people vote to elect the president, parliament officials and other authorities. If the people are unsatisfied, and if they have

a chance, they complain, they demonstrate, they go on strike and sometimes they rise against the government. Why? Because not only in most cases is the election a show-off, but even in the countries where votes really are counted, still people do not believe in their own representatives. The reason is that the influence of money and power in those elections is undeniable; minorities are neglected; the one who becomes a senator with the help of his fellow men should compensate them. Somehow he is responsible before the people who nominated him. So when he sits in the Senate, he should consider these points, not the welfare and interests of his nation. Now let's consider Bahá'í elections and whether they can remove the shortcomings of the present election procedures.

Any individual Bahá'í who is 21 years old or above is required and eligible to elect and be elected. A Bahá'í election has two distinct elements: secrecy and obligation.

## **1 – Secrecy**

Secrecy in Bahá'í elections is required before, during and after election. As secret ballots are used, the extent of this secrecy is such that not even spouses may know of each other's decision. Nobody stands as candidate. There are no nominations, no propaganda and no electioneering or asking for votes. The development matters of the community happens during the regular nineteen-day Feasts, by giving full recognition to individual Bahá'ís who have a question of understanding, an attitude of devotion, an ability of accomplishment, or suggestions.

## **2 – Obligation**

The other element of the election is the spiritual obligation as well as the special right of individual Bahá'ís.

When electing a Local Assembly or National Assembly, only nine members must be voted for; more or less than nine will invalidate the ballots. Each Bahá'í must vote in his place of residence, which means any person of any nationality must elect and may be elected in his present residence. He or she might be an American or Iranian who joins the election in Seoul for the Seoul Community. Election day for all local assemblies is April 21st of each year, through a special session by reading prayers and the Writings for better spiritual understanding and guidance.

Those elected do not have any special privileges or compensation, and do not have any position or standing above any other person in the community

All officers (chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer) are elected by secret ballot by members of the Assembly. An officer of an assembly or committee must receive votes from majority of the total nine voters. The chairman presides at each Assembly meeting and sees that everybody has a chance to speak and share in the consultation before a decision is reached. He must not use his position to impose his own ideas on the other members.

Local and National Assemblies appoint committees. Committees are appointed to help the Assembly to carry out its duties and they are considered as wings of the Assemblies.

They are responsible to the Assembly that appoints them, not directly to the community.

## **BAHA'I CONSULTATION**

One of the most important steps toward a real democratic operation is a good and healthy discussion. Even if we have a real democratic election, still without having the knowledge about a true discussion, we won't be able to make any useful result out of it. It is questionable that even for a right way to brush our teeth we accept the need to follow a given prescription in order to have durable teeth. But for discussion in a

proper way, we haven't thought so. Even scholars in the political field never mentioned how a good and fruitful discussion comes about. It is the lack of such prescription that is among the reasons for the present dissatisfactions in the political realm. I believe to follow the Bahá'í way of discussion is a reasonable answer to this problem.

Another feature which distinguishes the Bahá'í community from other organizations is the importance of consultation and its implementation in the administration.

The principle of Bahá'í consultation is applied at the 19-day feasts, the Local Assembly and the local committee meetings, the National Assembly and the national committee meetings, during conferences at the International Bahá'í bodies and at the Universal House of Justice. In brief, Bahá'í consultation is the standard practice at all Bahá'í discussions.

Bahá'í consultation unites individual opinions into a group decision and action. It brings out the experience and wisdom of the whole group, and results in solutions to problems undreamed of by any individual member. Consultation requires that members should have purity of motive, happiness of spirit, detachment from material things, and love and harmony among themselves. Everyone should express his opinion frankly and with full freedom after searching the Writings for pertinent passages. The discussion should not be back and forth to each other as memoers, but the words should be directed to the chairman. After a vote is taken, there is no difference between a unanimous decision and a majority decision, for all members will have to faithfully help to carry out every decision. As to consultation 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "The shining spark of truth comes forth only after the clash of differing opinions."

## NINETEEN DAY FEAST

The other problem that has been ascribed for a world government is the lack of communication between lower and higher officials in power and the ruled:

What is more, such a powerful world government would not only have difficulty in administration. It would also lack vertical human communication channels, channels that link lower officials in the pyramids of power with higher up. It would be without human communication networks between the rulers and the ruled, the networks that are needed to keep feedback processes and the circuits of information working.<sup>67</sup>

One unique and notable point in Bahá'í administration is discussion and exchange of ideas. As we have mentioned before, it has the Local and National Assemblies and, on the top, the Universal House of Justice. Every lower assembly constantly reports activities, problems and suggestions of its locality to the higher assembly and, at the same time, every community is in contact with its people through conferences, summer and winter schools and, most of all, through the Nineteen Day Feast. Let's see what a Nineteen Day Feast is.

The Nineteen Day Feast is held once every 19 days in each locality on the first day of each Bahá'í month.<sup>68</sup> This is a gathering for all Bahá'ís, contributing to a better fellowship and intimacy, better familiarity and knowledge of the administrative activities, at local, national or international levels. The feast consists of three parts: devotional, administrative (consultative) and social.

Prayers and readings from Bahá'í sacred Writings are read in the first part. The second part is the time to report Bahá'í news from the other parts of the region and of the world. It is also dedicated to consultation. The Local Assembly chairman usually presides over the meeting during the consultative part. The Local Assembly secretary presents the Assembly report and notes the recommendations that are made by the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 170–171.

<sup>68</sup> According to the Bahá'í calendar, there are 19 month, each having 19 days.

community and delivers them to the Local Assembly. As to its importance, a single suggestion from the farthest locality can reach the international bodies. Upon reaching the Universal House of Justice by this expediency, it can be communicated throughout the world and becomes effective in the Bahá'í world.

The third part of the Feast is the social part. Very simple food and drink contributes to the believers meeting in a spirit of unity and fellowship. This is a good time for the interrelation of all people of the community, sharing their love, affection and ideas.

### **MINORITIES**

Since human society accepted the word “beast,” we have started to act like animals trying hard to destroy the weaker ones, at all times. Even in civilized and democratic countries, they openly try to destroy ethnic identities. As a result, members of the minority groups do not have the sense of belonging and cooperation. Discrimination drives them toward committing crimes and rising up against the majority and towards autonomy. Many claim that it is a big barrier toward peace and tranquility. What has been done so far to solve this problem in the Bahá'í teachings?

Bahá'ís believe in the oneness of mankind, universal government, language, communication and education, and, on the other hand, believe in unity in diversity. It does not try to take away national, ethnic cultures, arts and languages or even dialects. On the contrary it praises them and cherishes them. That's why Bahá'í literature has been translated into about 650 different languages by now. Bahá'í temples (Houses of Worship) which exist around the world are open to Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike, and literature of every religion is available there.

The most interesting point in relation to the subject of minorities that I should mention is that, in a Bahá'í election, two persons always have equal rights. But if one who belongs to a minority group and one who belongs to the majority group receive equal votes, the winner will be the one who comes from the minority group.

## FUNCTION, AUTHORITY, AND POLITICS

Some of those who look at themselves as realists, usually do not bother themselves to study the Bahá'í teachings thoroughly; if they did, they would find the answer to every single question. Anyway, non-participation in political activities for Bahá'ís is among the objections of so-called realists and also because of their shallow consideration of the Bahá'í teachings they cannot find the relation of the present Bahá'í administration and its claim concerning the establishment of universal peace and unity.

It is very important to know that the present active administrative order in Bahá'í society is like an embryo that is forming in the mother's womb and getting ready for birth.

The corrupted and trembling order of the present time is facing overthrow and annihilation. With the disappearance of the last remains of the present order, the universal and the most great order of Bahá'u'lláh will become more visible in the world scene. All Bahá'ís who have served and gained experience in the administrative order of Bahá'í society will be able to render much help to establish this order throughout the world.

At the present time, Bahá'ís are devoting their time and concentration to the expansion of the Bahá'í society. They try to get as many people as possible into this Ark of Salvation. History and statistics are proving the phenomenal increase in numbers and spread of the Faith among every different nation and creed.<sup>69</sup>

As their most important duty is planning and executing plans for teaching, Local Spiritual Assemblies in their own jurisdictional territory and National Spiritual Assemblies at the national level, try to introduce the Faith to the national authorities and prominent people, as well as to the common people. The Bahá'í community continually tries to register Local and National Spiritual Assemblies in official offices

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<sup>69</sup> See the statistics in the Appendix.

because it doesn't want to be mistaken for unofficial organizations and groups who have activities in the opposite direction (against government).

According to the Bahá'í teachings, its followers are prohibited from participating in politics, even discussing it, because it is very obvious that political parties, and political ideas are contrary to each other. If participation of Bahá'ís in political activities were permitted, then by now the Bahá'í community itself would have been divided by the differences in political ideas. Political ideas and beliefs, even though each one has some good points, still are not able to solve the problems of human society as a whole.

The foundation of the present order is collapsing, is disappearing and to try to make some repairs here and there is to waste time and energy which is needed to establish universal order.

In the Bahá'í administrative order, believers are bound to obey the decisions of their authorized bodies. They cannot and should not do anything against the will and policy of the present government while they are teaching this universal order which includes obedience to government. These present governments have willy nilly reached their termination.

According to their principles, Bahá'ís are forbidden to murder or fight. In the case of compulsory military service, if the authorities do not excuse them, Bahá'ís must try to be appointed to units or jobs not involved in battle action.

Bahá'ís obey the government where they live and organizations which they belong to or work for. So no Bahá'í is permitted to attend any strike or demonstration against any government policy or to make any financial demands, because Bahá'ís believe the root of all present problems are from the same source, namely disunity among the members of the human race. Violence and protest are not going to solve any problem in the long run, and can only make it worse.

Their task is to dedicate themselves to the establishment of the world order of Bahá'u'lláh, and not be a cause for more disorder!

As we mentioned before, obedience and loyalty are foremost elements in the future Bahá'í government, so they as the founders of such order should be the examples of these principles. If Bahá'ís are ordered to do something which is not conformable to their beliefs, then within the limits of the law they will resist it, but even if Bahá'í activities in a country are not permitted, they would be stopped.

Among the objections toward the Bahá'í plan for a universal and united society can be the accusation of being visionary or utopian and not realistic. But I say that it is not true because it is the need of the time. As we know, functional activities appeared in the 19th century because it was felt that the needs of humans are not satisfied within national limitations. It was exactly in the same century that the Bahá'í Faith was proclaimed. As we know even transition from tribal unity to national unions has not been easy:

The problem of getting Kikuyus, Luos, and Masai in Kenya to consider themselves Kenyans has a forerunner in the attempt to mix Saxons and Franks and make them Germans.<sup>70</sup>

Now let's see what are the Bahá'í perspectives on this matter:

Every party, enterprise and present religious organization has some principles, regulations and goals to promote the welfare and benefit of its own group and its own followers, but the Bahá'í community's objectives are entirely different. It has dedicated itself to the establishment of the universal order of Bahá'u'lláh which means the spiritual and material progress and improvement of humankind. Establishment of a new society, free of hatred, prejudice, injustice and harshness, a united society and different from the present one in every aspect:

It calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script

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<sup>70</sup> Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, *Nationalism and Its Alternatives* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 13.

and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units.<sup>71</sup>

Bahá'ís believe that the new order will be established worldwide in two steps which idiomatically have been called the Lesser Peace and the Most Great Peace.

**The Lesser Peace:** This is a stage in which governments of the entire world will lay aside war as a means to solve problems. In fact, this phase is a transitional one from the present order to the Most Great Peace.

During this transitional stage, consciously or unconsciously, many principles and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh will be accepted by governments and peoples, with many of the fundamental short-comings and defects still existing.

The Lesser Peace will be established before the end of this century, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

**The Most Great Peace:** This stage will appear when the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh will be accepted and recognized by the people and the majority of governments.

Bahá'ís are expecting are a catastrophe before the establishment of the Lesser Peace, which will remove and clean away many of the problems of the present corrupted order in the world and will open it to the unique and wonderful order of Bahá'u'lláh:

Bestir yourselves, O people, in anticipation of the days of Divine Justice, for the promised hour is now come. ... Abandon that which ye possess, and seize that which God, Who layeth low the necks of men, hath brought. Know ye of a certainty that if ye turn not back from that which ye have committed,

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<sup>71</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 43.

chastisement will overtake you on every side, and ye shall behold things more grievous than that which ye beheld aforetime.<sup>72</sup>

As we see above, Bahá'u'lláh warns us about the catastrophe, but it is not the divination of a sorcerer but the foresight of a Divine Teacher. He is as an ingenious physician who can say this cancerous sick person will die in about six months. As the physician is not the cause of the cancer in the patient, likewise Bahá'u'lláh, too, only warns us. If we do not pay attention to the principles of brotherhood and oneness of mankind, we will face the catastrophe which is the result of our carelessness and lack of attention. But Bahá'ís try their best to bring the establishment of this wonderful and unique order as soon as possible, before or after the calamity.

The first step to establish a new civilization is to raise a Bahá'í universal government. This is possible when the majority of the governments all over the world, and the majority of their people turn to the Bahá'í Faith. Then the Universal House of Justice will rule as the greatest authority in the world as the people of the world turn to it for guidance and order.

### WORLD COMMONWEALTH

Some take the destruction of big Empires as a proof that running a universal government is impossible:

The unity of the Habsburg monarchy became increasingly strained in the course of the Nineteenth Century and was followed by disintegration in the twentieth.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, translated by Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> Karl W. Deutsch, *International Political Communities: An Anthology* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), p. 6.

The answer to this is that the destruction of the Hapsburg or British Commonwealth was because of their injustice, crimes and plundering within their ability in those territories.

The British colonial government did not bother about the high death rate in India, the lack of sewers in Calcutta, or the illiteracy of the Indian people.<sup>74</sup>

And I think it's natural and fair for any nation or even ethnic group to wish and insist to keep its autonomy and heritage

Men and nations want the benefits of international organization, but they also want to retain the privileges of sovereignty which are inseparable from international disorganization. ... The refusal of states to meet their budgetary allotments is a formidable political weapon which the opponents of a given United Nations's action may yield.<sup>75</sup>

We can see how the Bahá'í concept satisfies this need and desire:

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will

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<sup>74</sup> Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Its Alternatives* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 170.

<sup>75</sup> Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Swords into Plowshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization* (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 35 and 182.

carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth.<sup>76</sup>

The Bahá'í commonwealth will be free from the paralyzing points of the U.N., for instance it would rule upon Nations and not like U.N., ruled by them. The League of Nations and the U.N. have not been effective enough because of their weak points which do not exist in the Bahá'í plan

The League, established to prevent accidental war, was unable to cope with Hitler's deliberately plotted campaign of conquest.<sup>77</sup>

On the other hand, according to the Bahá'í plan this world legislature would be powerful enough to enforce its decisions and there won't be any power in the world to resist its commands

In the future Bahá'í world order, national units will exist, but their limitless power to carry on whatever they wish at the present time will be taken away from them by the universal government which will specify the general policy to them.

Each country, according to its domestic necessity, will arrange a police force, and the only considerable forces would be universal peacekeeping force. This force would crush any contingent action or selfish move against freedom and the oneness of humankind.

It is notable that this universal peacekeeping force would be the protector of the people and society and their authority would be confirmed by all nations, and this force would be under the direct control of the universal government.

A world commonwealth will need a universal court too, as the present court's problem is its weakness:

Refusal of states to use the court is still a major barrier to its full usefulness.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 203.

<sup>77</sup> Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Swords into Plowshares*, p. 41.

<sup>78</sup> Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Swords into Plowshares*, p. 211.

Now let's see how the universal court is described in Bahá'í teachings:

Although the League of Nations has been brought into existence, yet it is incapable of establishing Universal Peace. But the Supreme Tribunal which ... Bahá'u'lláh has described will fulfill this sacred task with the utmost might and power.

His plan is this: that the national assemblies of each country and nation (that is to say, parliaments) should elect two or three persons who are the choicest men of that nation, and are well informed concerning international laws and the relations between governments, and are aware of the essential needs of the world of humanity in this day. The number of these representatives should be in proportion to the number of inhabitants of that country. The election of these souls who are chosen by the national assembly, that is, the parliament, must be confirmed by the upper house, the congress and the cabinet and also by the president or monarch, so these persons may be the elected ones of all the nation and the government.

From among these people the members of the Supreme Tribunal will be elected, and all mankind will thus have a share therein, for every one of these delegates is fully representative of his nation. When the Supreme Tribunal gives a ruling on any international question, either unanimously or by majority rule, there will no longer be any pretext for the plaintiff or ground of objection for the defendant.

In case any of the governments or nations, in the execution of the irrefutable decision of the Supreme Tribunal, be negligent or dilatory, the rest of the nations will rise up against it, because all the governments and nations of the world are the supporters of this Supreme Tribunal. Consider what a firm foundation this is! But by a limited and restricted League the purpose will not be realized as it ought and should.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *The Bahá'í Peace Program* (Fifth Printing: 1970), pp. 9–10.

## **FORESIGHT FOR A UNITED WORLD**

Bahá'í suggestions for a new and united world are not just fancy ideas. It does not say only that unity is good, nor praise peace, but it shows us the way to achieve unity and prosperity. In the following section, we see how common education, language, mass-media, even economy and system of measurements have been considered in order to make a united world:

### **COMMON COMPULSORY EDUCATION**

As the anticipated Bahá'í society will be different in the future, its education also will differ entirely from the present one. There will be one common and compulsory system which will be executed all around the world, for without such a common education, bringing about equality and oneness would be impossible. By this method, all children all around the world, from childhood, will be inspired by sentiments of belonging to one common family.

In this system, spirituality, side by side with science, will be used to bring the children up as knowledgeable, understanding human beings.

Concerning the importance of education, the teacher (in the Bahá'í writings) has been given a unique and respected position, even receiving a share of a deceased person's property.

Another aspect of the Bahá'í system of education is teaching one common language and script all around the world:

The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to

whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential.<sup>80</sup>

I think nobody can deny the importance, necessity and role of a common language at present and the part that it has to create and promote sense of oneness and equality among human beings.

The role of the Latin language in the Roman Empire and Arabic in Moslem countries and English in United States of America in creating a sense of brotherhood or belonging to a nation is undeniable.

According to Bahá'í teaching, in that universal society, one common language will be chosen out of the present languages or will be invented and would be taught to all children around the world beside their native language, but at the same time they would study their native languages and dialects.

### INTERNATIONAL MASS MEDIA

In a unified world, an international broadcast network will be necessary. The Guardian, in his writings, refers to a unique system which transfers peoples, conversation, and news as fast possible, so, in the prospective future, we can see common television, radio, telegram, telephone and postal systems free of control and censorship by governments.

Of course a unified world needs a unique economy too, and also a unique system of measurements; a unique money system will be adopted and this money constantly will be evaluated keep its value

These are the points that Bahá'u'lláh, more than a hundred years ago, without any formal education, proclaimed as the necessities of a universal healthy economy,

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<sup>80</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1990), pp. 249–250.

and society and now professionals and experts little by little are coming to realize these, too.

Another object of concentration in Bahá'í teachings is the environment of human life and nature, which, as responsible human beings, we should take good care of, for the present generation and the generations to come.

Bahá'í teachings pay strong attention to economic problems, on one hand, and made work done in the spirit of service as worship.

Otherwise it would be destructive, as Marx held:

For Marx, each man, working in his own interest, contributes both to the necessary functioning and to the final destruction of the regime.<sup>81</sup>

On the other hand, suggestions were made for social security, graduated income tax, industrial profit-sharing, and rights and profits of both producers and workers, which have been protected in this system. A needy person, whose income is less than his requirements, not only is excused from taxation but receives some money to make up his requirements. And if somebody is very wealthy, he would pay even 50 percent, or more, as income tax:

The arrangements of the circumstances of the people must be such that poverty shall disappear, that everyone, as far as possible, according to his rank and position, shall share in comfort and well being.

We see amongst us men who are overburdened with riches on the one hand, and on the other those unfortunate ones who starve with nothing; those who possess several stately palaces, and those who have not where to lay their head. Some we find with numerous courses of costly and dainty food; whilst others can scarce find sufficient crusts to keep them alive. Whilst some are clothed in

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<sup>81</sup> Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), p. 49.

velvets, furs and fine linen, others have insufficient, poor and thin garments with which to protect them from the cold.

This condition of affairs is wrong, and must be remedied. Now the remedy must be carefully undertaken. It cannot be done by bringing to pass absolute equality between men.

Equality is a chimera! It is entirely impracticable! Even if equality could be achieved it could not continue—and if its existence were possible, the whole order of the world would be destroyed. The law of order must always obtain in the world of humanity. ...

It is important to limit riches, as it is also of importance to limit poverty. Either extreme is not good.<sup>82</sup>

It should be mentioned that when about 100 years ago Bahá'u'lláh suggested progressive taxes it was unknown to the people, and now even though it is known to them, it is not practiced in a proper way

In the future, with methods which are in agreement with the Bahá'í teachings, problems which have crippled today's economy will be solved and economic relations will be changed.

What is used for armaments and hostility today will be spent for welfare and for the betterment of humankind, and spent to combat diseases and hunger, illiteracy and ignorance:

The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and

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<sup>82</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks* (London: UK Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1972), pp. 151–153.

unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.<sup>83</sup>

According to the Bahá'í economic teachings, every Bahá'í locality must be self-sufficient, because each of them will have its own funds and incomes such as from income taxes, properties, and donations and also it will receive a share of the mines and natural resources which are located under its domain of jurisdiction.

Of course, during the transition period, weak localities will receive international assistance to put in order their domestic affairs, according to the Bahá'í universal standards.

Because injustice has ruled the world until now, there are understandable crises in social and economic aspects of human life:

The world cannot endure half skyscraper and half rubble.<sup>84</sup>

Until recently the failure of Ghana to attract either public or private foreign capital on any scale was not due to any particular disinclination to go to Ghana, but merely the fact that the total funds available to all the countries in need was very small.<sup>85</sup>

But, as we mentioned before, in the transition period according to the Bahá'í teachings, poor communities or countries will receive financial assistance to balance their own community with all the other communities:

This means that for most underdeveloped countries we need something which no existing program offers. Therefore, an important share of aid for their

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<sup>83</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 204.

<sup>84</sup> James Patrick, *Functionalism and World Politics: A Study Based on United Nations Programs Financing Economic Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 92.

<sup>85</sup> Patrick, *Functionalism and World Politics*, p. 240.

economic development must go in the form grants did, rather than as repayable loans.<sup>86</sup>

But unfortunately today this very important duty has been neglected by the developed countries:

On March 27, 1961, the president of the General Assembly asked twenty-five states to provide representation on the committee on a United Nations capital development fund provided by the assembly resolution. ... The representatives of Canada, France, Italy, Japan, the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom declared that their participation in the committee's work and their commitment to its purpose and recommendations would be sharply limited.<sup>87</sup>

So functional organizations, because of their financial dependency on the big powers, have not been able to render proper action. In the Bahá'í Writings, we can find that agriculture has been praised as the first industry in society, even as it has been mentioned that the solving of economic problems must start with the farmer. With concentration on agriculture, automatic harmony between human beings and nature will be restored.

Localities will consist of agricultural villages and natural-size cities and each of these localities will have every necessary institution such as a school, a university, hospital, orphanage, an exceptional children's school, a home for the aged and handicapped or a seat of the Local House of Justice, community assembly hall, a rehabilitation house for the socially sick and a House of Worship which is open to followers of all religions. The aged, sick, handicapped and so on not only are not forgotten, but are a center of attention, care and love of the community.

Criminals, or the socially sick people, will be treated in a spiritual way to overcome their shortcomings and become able to go back to free society. Although in a spiritual society that the Bahá'í Faith is going to erect, economical problems,

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<sup>86</sup> Patrick, *Functionalism and World Politics*, p. 207.

<sup>87</sup> Patrick, *Functionalism and World Politics*, p. 125.

discrimination, ignorance and so—on which are the motives of most crimes and law-breaking actions—would be solved and reformed.

It seems that the present-day society isolates lawbreakers in prison cells as a sort of revenge without much thought to rehabilitation—while, according to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, punishment and reward are considered as the pillars of justice and the tent of the order of the universe:

Economic, social and educational reforms will be instituted and then problems such as population explosion will be solved because the real reasons for these problems are poverty and ignorance which are the results of poverty itself.<sup>88</sup>

Another point that will solve many of today's problems and complexities in the future is freedom of movement for people, as well as the transfer of goods from any point of the world to another.

It would not be fanciful if we expect in such a society, culture and arts also to face a new renaissance, because, in our future society, all different cultures—without any prejudice or obstacles—will be encouraged and cherished and they will erect a new great world of culture and civilization. If today's art, under the influence of the present hopelessness and disappointing situation, represents ugliness, in the future it will express happiness, beauty and hope.

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<sup>88</sup> Resolution of the United Nations World Population Conference (Romania, 1974).

## CHAPTER V

### THE COOPERATION OF THE BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

The Bahá'í community, with a history of only 138 years, has achieved a very important and remarkable relationship with the United Nations, which grows daily. In this chapter, I will discuss this relationship between the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations.

The formation, after World War II, of the U.N (which, in some respects, is a continuation of the League of Nations), organized after World War I, proves that human beings feel and understand the need for discussion and cooperation on the international level. It also shows how the time for closed borders is over, and how it is impossible to deny the basic oneness of the human race, its needs and problems. In short, the sole existence of this organization, its goal and its activities in many different areas is an attempt to realize the teachings.

Bahá'u'lláh proposed and emphasized these teachings more than a hundred years ago. These teachings include such ideals as human rights, the elimination of all prejudices, the equality of rights and opportunities for men and women, and compulsory education for all the children around the world.

It is because of these common ideals that the Bahá'í International Community is willing to cooperate with the UN, while at the same time remaining free from participation in any political rivalries. In addition, the successful activities of Bahá'í communities around the world relating to these ideals motivated the United Nations to invite the Bahá'ís to cooperate with, discuss with and assist the UN through their representative body, the Bahá'í International Community.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Since April, 1948.

The Bahá'í International Community is accredited as an international non-governmental organization, in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and is associated with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI). It has representatives in New York, Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi.

In its cooperation with United Nations programs in the areas of social and economic development, the Bahá'í International Community has worked closely with ECOSOC, its functional commissions, committees, and associated bodies. In these activities it has furnished information, submitted statements, and published brochures on many issues: human rights, social development, status of women, world food, science and technology, population, drug abuse, environment, the United Nations University, the family, youth, water, crime prevention, the elimination of racial discrimination, desertification, and human settlements.

The Bahá'í International Community has also participated in special United Nations hearings and major world conferences concerned with the socioeconomic problems of our planet, as well as in the preparatory and follow-up meetings and activities.

The following are four basic ways in which the Bahá'í world community assists the United Nations through its consultative status with the Economic and Social Council:

1. Through participation in particular conferences and discussions in which we can contribute valuable ideas both from the Teachings of the Faith and from our experience in administering Bahá'í communities, uniting people of widely diverse national, racial, cultural and religious backgrounds in all parts of the world
2. Through cooperation with United Nations agencies at grassroots levels wherever the activities of a Bahá'í community have reached that stage of

development when the community is engaged in projects parallel or complementary to those of the United Nations, for example, literacy campaigns.

3. Through dissemination by our office to all Bahá'í communities of information on the activities and aims of the United Nations and its various agencies.

4. Wherever feasible, through collaboration at local and national levels, of Bahá'í institutions with the United Nations agencies in educating the general public on the aims and activities of the United Nations, for example, in the observance of United Nations Day, or activities in the Year of Human Rights, etc.

On March 8, 1976, the Bahá'í International Community achieved a third relationship with the United Nations in gaining consultative status with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

### **BAHA'I ATTITUDE TO UN CONTROVERSIAL POLITICAL ISSUES**

Since the Bahá'í International Community is, in its consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, drawing increasingly on the assistance and expertise of many Bahá'í communities and individual Bahá'ís when participating in various United Nations governmental conferences, seminars, and meetings convened around the world to resolve the economic and social issues of the planet, guidelines for an appropriate non-political attitude on the part of Bahá'í representatives and of supporting Bahá'í institutions became increasingly relevant

The world around us is seething with unrest caused by the conflicting interest of governments, peoples, races and individuals. Each of these conflicting parties has some good and some evil on its side, but the Bahá'ís will never become embroiled in these internecine conflicts by identifying with one or another of the parties, however much in our hearts we may sympathize with its aims.

Since some areas of great interest to the United Nations are highly political and controversial—such as peacekeeping disarmament, racial discrimination, and decolonization—the Bahá'í International Community and its member Bahá'í communities have to exercise much caution to avoid being drawn into activities that can affect the Faith adversely.

Since Bahá'í communities have, for over 100 years, been combating this prejudice and discrimination as part of their belief in the organic oneness of mankind and in their effort to establish world peace and an eventual world civilization, the cooperation of the Bahá'í International Community with the United Nations during the Decade for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (1974–1983) is, in fact, both continuous and highly effective in eradicating this source of disunity in the individual and in society.

The guidance that Bahá'í institutions offer to mankind does not comprise a series of specific answers to current problems, but rather the illumination of an entirely new way of life. Without this way of life, the problems are insoluble; with it they will either not arise, or, if they arise, can be resolved.

Another dimension of cooperation with non-governmental organizations which has emerged as the Bahá'í International Community has attended UN world Conferences such as the one on the Human Environment in Stockholm (1972), on Population and Food, respectively in Bucharest and Rome (1974), and on the Status of Women—the International Women's Year conference in Mexico City (1975)—is that of our participation in non-governmental organization activities parallel to the official United Nations governmental conferences, such as the Environmental Forum in Stockholm, the Population Tribune in Bucharest, the World Food Assembly in Rome, and the more recent International Women's Year Tribune in Mexico City.

More and more Bahá'í participants at United Nations conferences, seminars, or regular meetings of the Economic and Social Council, and its subsidiary bodies, have found it wise to follow an independent course of action.

This does not mean that the Bahá'í representatives do not show friendliness and courtesy to the representatives of other non-governmental organizations, and are not interested in the work of their organizations or in their points of view.

The United Nations frequently relies on non-governmental organizations to bring pressure to bear on its member-governments to implement actions of officially-approved in UN conferences and meetings.

It should be made clear that, because of our principle of non-involvement in politics, the Bahá'í International Community cannot be used, either by individual, national governments or by the United Nations itself, as an instrument to bring pressure to bear on national governments.

It is perfectly in order for Bahá'í institutions to present the Bahá'í view or recommendations on any subject of vital interest to the Faith which is under the consideration of a government, if the governmental authority itself invites such a submission, or if it is open to receive recommendations. The Bahá'í International Community shared the Bahá'í understanding of human rights and obligations in the information it submitted to the UN Division of Human Rights (at the request of that department of the UN Secretariat) for three studies conducted by the Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities: (1) on discrimination against indigenous populations; (2) on the rights of persons belonging to religious and linguistic minorities; and (3) on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide.

### **COLLABORATION OF BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES AT LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS**

As Bahá'ís, we obey the regulations of the governments under whose jurisdiction we reside, and if any government does not look upon our activities in association with the United Nations with favour, we should, within the limits of wise discretion, curtail, and, if necessary, stop such activities. In Bahá'í-UN activities at

national and local levels, Bahá'í communities are learning very effectively to relate their cooperation with the UN to their own goals. The International Women's Year and now the UN Decade for Women (1976–1985) is a good illustration. Since one of the present goals for the Bahá'í world is the education of women—and many National Spiritual Assemblies have established women's committees—cooperation with the UN can link an increased awareness which the governments and other non-governmental organizations are bringing to all peoples regarding the equality of men and women, to the more complete Bahá'í vision in which the equality of members of both sexes is part of the unity of mankind within a Divine plan.

Since all countries are concerned with human settlements, and the quality of the life of the men women, and children living in them, Bahá'í-UN cooperation in these areas would most probably be looked upon favorably by national governments.

**RELATIONSHIP OF BAHÁ'I COMMUNITIES TO THE UNITED  
NATIONS INFORMATION CENTER AND UNITED NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OFFICES**

With its headquarters in New York, the Bahá'í International Community, and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, are affiliated with the UN Office of Public Information, respectively, as an international and a national non-governmental organization (NGO). An equivalent relationship with the UN Information Centre (UNIC) is available to National Spiritual Assemblies in countries for which the Information Centre provides services.

The Bahá'í International Community, in cooperation with the Office of Public Information, was further recognized through the election of Dr. Victor de Araujo to membership on the Executive Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations with OPI. He served as vice-chairman in 1969 and as chairman in 1971 and 1972.

## **COOPERATION IN PROJECTS AT THE GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL**

The cooperation of the Bahá'í International Community with the United Nations agencies exists at the grass-roots level “wherever the activities of a Bahá'í community have reached that stage of development when the community is engaged in projects parallel or complimentary to those of the United Nations, for example, literacy campaigns,” according to the Universal House of Justice. It is one that we are, only now, beginning to explore. Bahá'í primary and secondary schools have been established in several countries, and literacy programs have already been started by many Bahá'í communities to teach illiterate Bahá'ís to read and write. Even at this stage of Bahá'í development projects, it would be good for Bahá'í communities to make known to United Nations Information Centres, United Nations Development Programme offices, as well as to UNICEF and any other appropriate UN Agency, the projects that they are undertaking in literacy, the development of women, and the education of children, no matter how small these programs may be. It is quite possible that Bahá'í expertise in these areas may be of use to programs which the United Nations is undertaking in cooperation with the governments of the country. Bahá'í communities might also find it valuable to inform the appropriate national government office about these programs, which are of benefit to the citizens of the country.

## **DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

The Bahá'í International Community office in New York has, for many years, been disseminating to the Bahá'í communities throughout the world, through their National Spiritual Assemblies, or their appointed United Nations representatives or committees, “information on the activities and aims of the United Nations and its various agencies.” They have, of course, because of the vast range of activities of the United Nations—involving all the affairs of humanity—focused on the areas they felt would provide Bahá'í communities with means for constructive, non-political cooperation through the Bahá'í-UN program. In the last few years, the Bahá'í International Community has focused on economic and social development, the

equality of men and women, population, world food, and mailed literature, posters, occasionally films kindly lent them by the UNDP, which Bahá'í communities could use for sponsoring UN Day and Human Rights Day programs.

In guiding Bahá'í communities, the Bahá'í International Community office with the UN has emphasized the United Nations International Year for Human Rights (1968), International Education Year (1970), International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Prejudice (1971), World Population Year (1974), and the International Women's Year (1975). Besides providing UN materials, they have prepared and made available pamphlets, statements, and compilations presenting the Bahá'í point of view on world problems of urgent concern to the United Nations.

The Bahá'í International Community's office has produced, for use by Bahá'í communities in their cooperation with the UN, Bahá'í pamphlets relating to UN issues, statements presented to UN meetings of conferences offering the Bahá'í solution, and compilations of relevant Bahá'í teachings on a UN issue. They are gradually able to make these materials available in the English, French, and Spanish languages which can be used in most of the Bahá'í world. Though local Bahá'í institutions, such statements and pamphlets can be, and have been, translated into local languages with much success.

### **USE OF BAHÁ'Í CENTRES FOR UN MEETINGS OR PROGRAMS**

A United Nations Information Centre for official UN programs, to observe UN or Human Rights Day, for instance, or for meetings to coordinate the activities of local nongovernmental organizations can be held at Bahá'í Centres.

Therefore it would be essential for the Bahá'í community to make clear to the United Nations Information Centre its non-political nature, and to be sure that any meeting held on Bahá'í premises, at its request, would be on subjects such as development, environment, status of women, etc., in the UN economic and social fields. Otherwise, a Bahá'í community may at some time find itself in an awkward

position whereby the government might advise and encourage it to work closely with the United Nations in political areas in which the government itself is interested, which, of course, the Bahá'ís cannot do.

Hopefully, as Bahá'í communities grow in number and depth, the nature and contribution of such communities to the improvement of the quality of life of the people of the country and of the entire planet will be so well known to the national government—and to the UN offices—that the limits within which the Bahá'í community, because of its non-political nature, can cooperate with the UN are clearly understood.

### **RELATIONSHIP OF THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES TO UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Bahá'í communities have, on many occasions, cooperated with the United Nations Associations (UNAs) in UN activities. In fact, Bahá'í national communities have taken the lead in organizing UNA branches, joining with local citizens interested in the work of the UN.

The relationship of a Bahá'í community with other non-governmental organizations must be evaluated on an individual basis. Some organizations are almost entirely non-political. In other cases, the Bahá'í community may be faced with the same problems as in its cooperation with the UNA.

Whether the relationship of a Bahá'í community is with the UNA or with other non-governmental organizations, it should not be a formal nature, through affiliation with these organizations, but an informal cooperation for specific events. In such a way, the Bahá'í community retains its independence of character and action, and chooses, if conditions are appropriate, to associate itself in co-sponsorship or participation with other friendly organizations which share some of its goals.

## THE BAHÁ'IS<sup>90</sup>

One often hears the name “Bahá’í International Community,” either from its representatives to the UN or by reading its various pamphlets, bearing such challenging titles as “The Promise of Disarmament and Peace,” “The Equality of Men and Women: A New Reality,” and “Building Unified Community.”

It is a community composed of members of the Bahá’í Faith, uniting men and women of the most varied religious and ethnic origins, representing almost all nationalities, classes, trades, and professions, rich and poor, literate and illiterate. It originated in Persia in 1844, when a Prophet-Herald named the Bab (“Gate”) proclaimed the advent of a new age for humankind.

He also foretold the coming, a decade later of Bahá’u’lláh (“the Glory of God”), Who anticipated the emergence of a world civilization based on world order and universal peace.

The Bab and Bahá’u’lláh are regarded as the Twin Founders of the Bahá’í Faith, which has spread to over 88,000s<sup>91</sup> localities in 340 countries and territories, as its teachings revolve around the concept of the organic oneness of humanity.

In working to achieve the unity of mankind, Bahá’ís obey the authority of the duly constituted governments under which they live, at the same time abstaining from partisan political affairs. “This organization,” a UN official once said, “comes as close to being truly non-political as any NGO in consultative status”:

Its affairs are directed by an international governing board elected every five years by democratic process, without nomination or electioneering, by the 130 national affiliates of the Bahá’í International Community. Leadership of the Community is invested in its local, national, and international institutions rather than in any individual or clergy.

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<sup>90</sup> Quoted from “Secretarial News,” United Nations Headquarters, New York, 31 October 1978.

<sup>91</sup> In August 1980, pp. 109, 173.

The Community is also a non-governmental organization cooperating closely with the UN to achieve the goals expressed in the Charter, which are consistent with the beliefs of the Bahá'ís.

Their Sacred Writings emphasize the building of a world order, the unity of mankind and the attainment of human rights, while instilling a deep commitment to the betterment of the human condition everywhere. The Community has consultative status with ECOSOC and UNICEF and affiliation with OPI. It has representatives at UN Headquarters, at Geneva, and with UNEP in Nairobi.

Dr. Victor de Araujo, Representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the UN has worked steadily to broaden the Bahá'í relationship with the UN, assisted by Dr. Will. C. Van den Hoonaard, Alternate Representative, and Mrs. Mary Sawicki, Alternate Representative for the Status of Women, complemented a secretarial staff. The New York office is in the Carnegie International Center at 345 East 46th Street.

The Community has taken part in the work of UN bodies concerned with the issues of human rights, social development, status of women, environment, human settlements, world food, science and technology for development, population, law of the sea, crime prevention, narcotic drugs, youth, the family, and the UN University, it has furnished information, submitted statements and reports, or published brochures on most of these subjects.

It cooperates fully in public information programmes at Headquarters, and through its member Bahá'í communities around the world by observing such annual events as UN Day, World Development Information Day, Human Rights Day, Universal Children's Day, and World Environment Day.

Bahá'ís advocate the oneness of all religions under one God and therefore accept the unity of mankind; their communities have gained considerable experience in eliminating all forms of prejudice and discrimination. There are today over 1,640

ethnic groups represented in the Bahá'í world community, drawn together by a common bond of loyalty to mankind as a whole.

Bahá'ís have upheld the equality of men and women since the founding of their faith. On an international, regional, and national scale, Bahá'ís have organized women's conferences, and have encouraged the participation of Bahá'í women in all phases of Bahá'í community life, including the administration of the community's affairs.

Bahá'ís believe that religion must work hand-in-hand with science. Consequently, their communities help to overcome obstacles of tradition and superstition which prevent many people from benefiting from the developments of science and technology.

Stressing the importance of the development of the human mind, the communities foster the principle of universal compulsory education by establishing primary and secondary schools open to children of all backgrounds and beliefs in places where other educational facilities are not available. They have also established adult education programmes in basic literacy.

In some cases, such as among the Quechua-speaking regions of South America, Bahá'ís are standardizing Quechua (spoken by ten million people in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador), to facilitate education and communication between peoples. The Bahá'í Writings today translated into some 680 languages.

Arts and sciences are praised, and Bahá'ís are enjoined to dedicate themselves to those areas of human knowledge that do not begin and end in words, but are of benefit to mankind.

In Bahá'í communities, every person must have a trade or a profession—some form of gainful employment—so that he may not only provide for himself and for his family, but also be of service to humanity.

Such values, firmly linked as they are in Bahá'í communities with a consciousness of the interdependence of all peoples and the goal of one world united in peace, provide the fundamental motivation in solving the problems of our world.

Bahá'ís feel that the UN is a worldwide institution where the themes of the unity of mankind, of global interdependence, and of international social and economic undertakings are most evident. The attitudes and activities of the Bahá'í International Community represent “grass-roots” involvement in the aims of the Charter and occupy therefore, a noteworthy place in its support of the the broad aims and programmes of the UN.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis, because of insufficient information and limited access to necessary materials, the author dares not say that this is a thorough presentation of the Bahá'í Faith and its teachings. But in striving for that goal, I hope at least a glimmer of that light in the dark night will lead those who wish to investigate the truth of this religion.

At the present time, history is facing the greatest threat in all its history—the threat of obliteration. This threat has emerged because human society has accepted and followed the law of the jungle in its struggle for existence, largely disregarding human intelligence and ability and at the same time remaining ignorant of its spiritual aspect. It has created and extended a number of deadly weapons, the largest arsenals of which are located in the West and East block countries, and which are capable of eliminating any trace of human civilization from the surface of the globe.

A few months ago Deng Xiao Ping, Vice Premier of The People's Republic of China, foretold that in the 1980s it would be impossible to avoid a third World War. Mr. U. Thant, former Secretary-General of United Nations, wrote the following statement:

I do not wish to seem overdramatic, but I can only conclude from the information that is available to me as Secretary-General that the Members of the United Nations have perhaps ten years left in which to subordinate their ancient quarrels and launch a global partnership to curb the arms race, to improve the human environment, to defuse the population explosion, and to supply the required momentum to world development efforts. If such a global partnership is not forged within the next decade, then I very much fear that the problems I

have mentioned will have reached such staggering proportions that they will be beyond our capacity to control.<sup>92</sup>

The danger is real, so the solution must be real and practical. It is not a few who laugh at the vague and silly solution. It is not a few who laugh at the vague and silly solution presented by some scholars as “Balance of Power” to achieve and maintain international peace. If the world is to be safe from the dangers of war, a world-wide revolution is needed in every aspect of human society and among the parts thereof. Bahá’ism propounds that only through changing the individual, the most fundamental unit of society, can we change the society itself. Along side this change must come a revolution in the field of education: before we taught our children the struggle for existence as a pattern of life, now we must teach them cooperation as a mode of living with our fellow human beings.

The rights of half the global population have been largely ignored until now. All must consider and recognize that as long rights and opportunities as men we deny women the same as we cannot have a just society. Racial discrimination must be abolished; economic problems, including the extremes of wealth and poverty must be resolved through the application of spiritual principles; political strife and contention between governments must cease. But again I say none of these changes are possible in a positive direction until we change our spiritual and intellectual values and standards:

We affirm finally that any deliberate attempt to reach a rational and enduring state of equilibrium by planned measures, rather than by chance or catastrophe, must ultimately be founded on a basic change of values and goals at individual, national, and world levels.<sup>93</sup>

It would be a grave misunderstanding to imagine that the Bahá’í Faith only proposes some advice or guidance to the moral and sociological aspects of human

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<sup>92</sup> Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III, *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972), p. 17.

<sup>93</sup> Donella H. Meadows, *et al.*, *The Limits to Growth*, p. 195.

society, or to have the notion that Bahá'ism suggests a utopia far from the reality of everyday life.

I hope that whoever reads this paper will use his reason and an unbiased mind to discover that these teachings offer the perfect means through which we can create a glorious world order. They offer guidance for all members of the human family to live together peacefully, not out of fear and pressure, but out of love.

I would like to conclude this thesis with a quotation from the writings of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith:

Let there be no mistake. The principle of the Oneness of Mankind—the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve—is no mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of vague and pious hope. Its appeal is not to be merely identified with a reawakening of the spirit of brotherhood and good-will among men, nor does it aim solely at the fostering of harmonious cöoperation among individual peoples and nations. Its implications are deeper, its claims greater than any which the Prophets of old were allowed to advance. Its message is applicable not only to the individual, but concerns itself primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all the states and nations as members of one human family. It does not constitute merely the enunciation of an ideal, but stands inseparably associated with an institution adequate to embody its truth, demonstrate its validity, and perpetuate its influence. It implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced. It constitutes a challenge, at once bold and universal, to outworn shibboleths of national creeds—creeds that have had their day and which must, in the ordinary course of events as shaped and controlled by Providence, give way to a new gospel, fundamentally different from, and infinitely superior to, what the world has already conceived. It calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and

language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units.

It represents the consummation of human evolution—an evolution that has had its earliest beginnings in the birth of family life, its subsequent development in the achievement of tribal solidarity, leading in turn to the constitution of the city-state, and expanding later into the institution of independent and sovereign nations.

The principle of the Oneness of Mankind, as proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh, carries with it no more and no less than a solemn assertion that attainment to this final stage in this stupendous evolution is not only necessary but inevitable, that its realization is fast approaching, and that nothing short of a power that is born of God can succeed in establishing it.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Call to the Nations* (London: W & J Mackay Limited, 1977), pp. 31–32.

## APPENDIX: UPDATED BAHÁ'Í STATISTICS

In my original 1981 thesis, I had provided statistics documenting the worldwide spread of the Bahá'í Faith. At that time, comprehensive statistics were published periodically in the *Bahá'í World* volumes. But the last such collection of statistics was published in 2007, which gives the following brief overview:

### General Statistics

More than 5 million people are members of the Bahá'í Faith. As of Riḍván 2006, the Bahá'í community had 179 National Spiritual Assemblies and thousands of Local Spiritual Assemblies around the world. The Bahá'í Faith is established in 191 independent countries and 45 dependent territories or overseas departments. There are 2,112 indigenous tribes, races, and ethnic groups represented within the worldwide Bahá'í community.<sup>95</sup>

Currently, links to various national Bahá'í communities are available online as follows:

The Bahá'í Faith is established in more than 100,000 localities in virtually every country and territory around the world. Below you can find links to the websites of many Bahá'í communities.

### Africa

- Angola
- Benin
- Botswana

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<sup>95</sup> See: "Statistics," *The Bahá'í World, 2005–2006: An International Record* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2007), p. 249, available online: [https://bahai.works/Bah%C3%A1%E2%80%99%C3%AD\\_World/Volume\\_34](https://bahai.works/Bah%C3%A1%E2%80%99%C3%AD_World/Volume_34). (Accessed September 2, 2019.)

- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Cape Verde
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Congo, Democratic Republic of the
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Equatorial Guinea
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mauritius
- Morocco
- Mozambique

- Namibia
- Nigeria
- Republic of the Congo
- Réunion
- Rwanda
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Swaziland
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Tunisia
- Uganda
- Zambia

### **Americas**

- Argentina
- Bahamas
- Belize
- Bermuda
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- Colombia

- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- French Guiana
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Guatemala
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Jamaica
- Leeward Islands
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Puerto Rico
- Suriname
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago

- United States
- Alaska
- Hawaii
- Uruguay
- Venezuela
- Virgin Islands

### **Australasia**

- Australia
- Caroline Islands
- Cook Islands
- Fiji
- Guam
- Kiribati
- Marshall Islands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Northern Mariana Islands
- Papua New Guinea
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu

## Asia

- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Bahrain
- Cambodia
- Georgia
- Hong Kong
- India
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Kurdistan Region of Iraq
- Japan
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Korea
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Lebanon
- Macau
- Malaysia
- Sarawak
- Mongolia

- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Thailand
- Turkmenistan
- United Arab Emirates
- Uzbekistan
- Vietnam
- Yemen

## **Europe**

- Albania
- Austria
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark

- Estonia
- Faroe Islands
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland, Republic of
- Italy
  - Sicily
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Macedonia
- Malta
- Monaco
- Montenegro
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal

- Romania
- Russian Federation
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
  - Canary Islands
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Turkey
- Ukraine<sup>96</sup>

A new set of Bahá'í world statistics is in the process of being generated through software program, called “SRP 3.0”:

It's the third major version of a computer application developed by the Universal House of Justice to analyze pertinent statistics from the local to worldwide levels. It uses data to draw attention to strengths, track progress and identify patterns of growth, equipping agencies and institutions to determine the next set of goals to be adopted.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> “A Global Community: Websites and contact information.” Available online: <https://www.bahai.org/national-communities/>. (Accessed October 23, 2019.)

<sup>97</sup> “Statistical tool helps measure capacity — and builds it, too.” Available online: <https://www.bahai.us/community/news/2017/july-august-2017/statistical-tool-helps-measure-capacity-and-builds-it-too/>. (Accessed September 2, 2019.)

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## 요약 (要約)

저자는 이 論文에서 人類社會를 한 국가나 한 가족 같이 有機的으로 統合하고, 協助的인 하나의 共同社會로 건설할 수 있는 方案을 論하였다.

이 論文의 主題가 놀라운 것이라면 그것은 우리가 가지고 있는 既存概念 때문일 것이다. 오늘날 세계의 國家들은 그 지역적 경계에 의해서 뿐만 아니라 言語的, 人種的, 文化的 차이에 의해서 서로 獨立, 分離되어 있다. 그러나 미국이나 소련같은 國家는 그러한 差異點을 그 나라 안에서 많이 볼 수가 있음에도 불구하고 하나의 有機的 統合體로 維持되고 있다. 이 점으로 미루어 보아 그러한 差異點이 世界 全體가 하나의 世界 政府 下에 통합될 수 없는 이유는 될 수 없음을 유추해 낼 수 있다.

대부분의 사람들은 아직도 세계의 여러 문제를 외면 하고, 인류에 대한 일말의 책임감도 느끼지 않은 채 살아가고 있다. 하물며 科學者, 哲學者 들마저도 인류의 平和 暢達을 의심하고 있으며, 거기에 더하여 그것을 조 소하고 있기 까지 하다. 그들은 平和達成을 한낱 幻想으로 단정하며, 그것이 현실로서 이루어질 수 있다는 사실 따위는 전혀 무시하고 있는 것이다. 그러나 그 한낱 幻想에 불과한 세계 통합의 방안이 바하올라의 가르침 속에 하나하나 제시되어 있다. 그는 世界統合의 靑寫眞을 제시했고, 그것을 이 록하는 데 있어서의 原則과 指針을 마련했으며 行政機構의 構造와 運當 方案 및 個人의 道德的 基準과 特性까지도 세세히 묘사했다. 그의 이러한 가르침은 바하이 신앙으로 널리 알려져 있다.

이 論文에서 저자는 바하이 신앙의 간략한 歷史를 소개하고, 바하이 신앙의 가르침과 원칙에 대하여 언급한 몇몇 저명한 科学者 및 政治人들의 말을 기술하였으며, 또한 이러한 가르침과 원칙 및 그 실현 방안을 제시했다. 아울러 바하이 신앙과 國際聯合의 관계를 밝혔고 바하이 신앙의 成長에 관한 통계 자료를 제시했다.

이 論文 전체를 통하여 著者는 바하이 신앙 ( Baha'i Faith ) 과 人類統合 사이의 相關關係를 특히 강조했다.