Achieving Peace
Part 1 – The Lesser Peace

Sustainable Development Goal 16

International Environment Forum

Youth Discourse – Peace 1

Sustainable Development Goal 16

16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Peace

The ideal of world peace is taking form. Obstacles have collapsed, conflicts have begun to be resolved through consultation, and military aggression is facing unified international action. This has awakened in both humanity and many world leaders some hopefulness about the future of our planet.

(Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, §1)

Peace

The earth's peoples want an end to conflict and to the suffering and ruin that can happen anywhere. This desire for change can help to overcome the remaining barriers that block global peace. This cannot come only from calls for action against the ills affecting society. It requires a broad vision of human prosperity now possible through the spiritual and material well-being now within reach. All the planet's inhabitants must benefit without any conditions unrelated to the goal of reorganising human affairs.

(Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, §2)

Peace

Now that the planet is physically unified, making interdependent all who live on it, the history of humanity as one people is now beginning. The long, slow civilising of human character has been uneven and not shared material advantages equitably. Nevertheless, the earth's inhabitants can now... take up, consciously and systematically, the responsibility for the design of their future.

(Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, §3)

The Promise of World Peace

The Great Peace which people of good will over countless generations have wished, and for which the sacred scriptures have constantly promised, is now within the reach of the nations. For the first time in history it is possible for everyone to view the entire planet and its diversified peoples in one perspective. World peace is not only possible but inevitable. It is the next stage in the evolution of this planet.

(based on Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, October 1985)

The Promise of World Peace

Whether peace is to be reached only after unimaginable horrors because humanity clings to old patterns of behaviour, or is to come now by an act of consultative will, is the choice before all on earth. At this time when the problems confronting nations have become one common concern, failure to stop conflict and disorder would be irresponsible.

(based on Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, October 1985)

The Promise of World Peace

Whatever suffering and turmoil may come in the years immediately ahead, however dark the immediate circumstances, the Baha'i community believes that humanity can meet these trials with confidence in the ultimate outcome. Far from leading to the end of civilization, the convulsive changes facing humanity will serve to release the "potentialities inherent in the station of man" and reveal "the full measure of his destiny on earth, the innate excellence of his reality".

(based on Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, October 1985)

Greater insight

However difficult matters are at present, and however close to the limits of their endurance some sections of societies are brought, humanity will ultimately pass through this ordeal, and it will emerge on the other side with greater insight and with a deeper appreciation of its inherent oneness and interdependence.

(Universal House of Justice, Naw-Ruz 177 – 20 March 2020)

Bahá’í warnings

... the unfailing divine protection that encompasses the House of Justice will ensure that, as the Bahá’í world navigates the turmoil of a most perilous period in humanity’s social evolution, it will follow undeviatingly the course set by Providence.

(Reflections on the First Century of the Formative Age, Universal House of Justice, To the Bahá’ís of the World, 28 November 2023)

Bahá'í warnings

None can anticipate precisely what course the forces of disintegration are destined to take, what violent convulsions will yet assail humanity in this travailing age, or what obstacles and opportunities may arise, until the process reaches its culmination in the appearance of that Great Peace that will signalize the arrival of the stage when, recognizing the unity and wholeness of humankind, the nations will "put away the weapons of war, and turn to the instruments of universal reconstruction".

(Reflections on the First Century of the Formative Age, Universal House of Justice, To the Bahá'ís of the World, 28 November 2023)

Promoting unity and peace

Sensitized as they are to the importance of harmony and the fruitlessness of conflict, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh seek to cultivate those conditions that are most conducive to the emergence of unity in any setting.

(Universal House of Justice, 18 January 2019)

Palais des Nations

Geneva

Peace

Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace, hold ye fast unto this, the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents.

O rulers of the earth! Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions. Beware lest ye disregard the counsel of the All-Knowing, the Faithful.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 253)

Peace

Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 253)

Peace

The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men. Such a peace demandeth that the Great Powers should resolve, for the sake of the tranquillity of the peoples of the earth, to be fully reconciled among themselves.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 249-250)

Peace

Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him. If this be done, the nations of the world will no longer require any armaments, except for the purpose of preserving the security of their realms and of maintaining internal order within their territories. This will ensure the peace and composure of every people, government and nation. We fain would hope that the kings and rulers of the earth, the mirrors of the gracious and almighty name of God, may attain unto this station, and shield mankind from the onslaught of tyranny.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 249-250)

The Lesser Peace

This, indeed, is the greatest means for ensuring the tranquillity of the nations. It is incumbent upon the Sovereigns of the world—may God assist them—unitedly to hold fast unto this Peace, which is the chief instrument for the protection of all mankind. It is Our hope that they will arise to achieve what will be conducive to the well-being of man.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), pp. 30-31)

The Lesser Peace

It is their duty to convene an all-inclusive assembly, which either they themselves or their ministers will attend, and to enforce whatever measures are required to establish unity and concord amongst men. They must put away the weapons of war, and turn to the instruments of universal reconstruction. Should one king rise up against another, all the other kings must arise to deter him. Arms and armaments will, then, be no more needed beyond that which is necessary to ensure the internal security of their respective countries.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, rev. ed. 1988, pp. 30-31)

The Promise of World Peace

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?

(based on Shoghi Effendi, quoted in Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, October 1985)

The Promise of World Peace

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 war, certain rights to impose taxation and all rights to maintain armaments, except for purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions.

(based on Shoghi Effendi, quoted in Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, October 1985)

The Lesser Peace

In all matters moderation is desirable. If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil. Consider the civilization of the West, how it hath agitated and alarmed the peoples of the world. An infernal engine hath been devised, and hath proved so cruel a weapon of destruction that its like none hath ever witnessed or heard.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 69)

The Lesser Peace

The purging of such deeply-rooted and overwhelming corruptions cannot be effected unless the peoples of the world unite in pursuit of one common aim and embrace one universal faith. Incline your ears unto the Call of this Wronged One and adhere firmly to the Lesser Peace.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 69)

The Lesser Peace

It is incumbent upon the ministers of the House of Justice to promote the Lesser Peace so that the people of the earth may be relieved from the burden of exorbitant expenditures. This matter is imperative and absolutely essential, inasmuch as hostilities and conflict lie at the root of affliction and calamity.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 89)

Lesser and Most Great Peace

...concerning the time and means through which the Lesser and Most Great Peace, referred to by Bahá'u'lláh, will be established... ...the lesser peace will come about through political efforts of the states and nations of the world, and independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or effort, and the Most Great peace established through the instrumentality of the believers, and by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í super state....

(From a letter written of behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 14, 1939)