

# *THE PROMISE OF WORLD PEACE*

Universal House of Justice

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Section IV – The Most Great Peace shall come

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# The Promise of World Peace

The source of the optimism we feel is a vision far above ending war and creating agencies of international co-operation. Permanent peace among nations is an essential stage, but not, Baha'u'llah states, the ultimate goal of the social development of humanity.

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Beyond the truce forced upon the world by the fear of nuclear catastrophe, beyond the political peace reluctantly agreed by suspicious competing nations, beyond practical arrangements for security, beyond even the many experiments in co-operation which these steps will make possible lies the final goal: the unification of all the peoples of the world in one universal family.

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Disunity is a danger that the nations and peoples of the earth can no longer support; the results are too terrible to imagine, too obvious to require any demonstration. "The well-being of mankind," Baha'u'llah wrote more than a century ago, "its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established."

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In observing that "mankind is groaning, is dying to be led to unity, and to terminate its age-long martyrdom", Shoghi Effendi further commented that: "Unification of the whole of mankind is the hallmark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life."

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Today all forces of change support this view. The proofs can be seen in the many examples already cited of the efforts towards world peace in current international movements and developments. The many men and women, from almost every culture, race and nation on earth, who serve the many agencies of the United Nations, represent a planetary "civil service" whose successes show co-operation even under difficult conditions.

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A desire for unity, like a spiritual springtime, shows through many international congresses that bring together people from all disciplines. It motivates appeals for international projects involving children and youth. Indeed, it is the real source of the interfaith movement through which members of historically opposed religions and sects are drawn together. Alongside the opposite trend to warfare and selfish power against which it struggles, the drive towards world unity is one of the dominant features of life on the planet at the end of the twentieth century.

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The experience of the Baha'i community may be seen as an example of this growing unity. It is a community of some three to four million people drawn from many nations, cultures, classes and beliefs, engaged in a wide range of activities serving the spiritual, social and economic needs of the peoples of many lands. It is a single social organism, representative of the diversity of the human family, conducting its affairs through a system of commonly accepted consultative principles, and accepting all the great religions in human history.



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Its existence is yet another proof of the practicality of its Founder's vision of a united world, another evidence that humanity can live as one global society, equal to whatever challenges its coming maturity may require. If the Baha'i experience can contribute in some way to reinforcing hope in the unity of the human race, we are happy to offer it as a model for study.

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In contemplating the great importance of the task now challenging the entire world, we bow in humility before the majesty of God, Who out of His infinite love has created all humanity from the same stock; exalted the gem-like reality of man; honoured it with intellect and wisdom, nobility and immortality; and conferred upon man the "unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him", a capacity that "must needs be regarded as the generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation."

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We believe that all human beings have been created "to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization"; that "to act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man"; that the virtues that suit human dignity are trustworthiness, forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all peoples.

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We support the belief that the "potentialities inherent in the station of man, the full measure of his destiny on earth, the innate excellence of his reality, must all be manifested in this promised Day of God." These motivate our firm faith that unity and peace are the goal that humanity can reach.

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At this moment, the expectant voices of Baha'is can be heard despite their persecution in the land in which their Faith was born. By their example of steadfast hope, they declare their belief that the realization soon of this age-old dream of peace is now, through the transforming effects of Baha'u'llah's revelation, granted the force of divine authority.

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Thus we send you not only a vision in words: we call upon the power of deeds of faith and sacrifice; we convey the anxious plea of Baha'is everywhere for peace and unity. We join with all who are the victims of aggression, all who long for an end to conflict and quarrelling, all whose devotion to principles of peace and world order promotes the higher purposes for which humanity was created by God.

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In our sincere desire to share with you the strength of our hope and the depth of our confidence, we quote the promise of Baha'u'llah: "These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."

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