

Disintegration and Integration

How to stay positive
When faced with a crisis

Two processes: disintegration and integration

“The process of disintegration must inexorably continue, and its corrosive influence must penetrate deeper and deeper into the very core of a crumbling age. Much suffering will still be required ere the contending nations, creeds, classes and races of mankind are fused in the crucible of universal affliction, and are forged by the fires of a fierce ordeal into one organic commonwealth, one vast, unified, and harmoniously functioning system. Adversities unimaginedly appalling, undreamed of crises and upheavals, war, famine, and pestilence, might well combine to engrave in the soul of an unheeding generation those truths and principles which it has disdained to recognize and follow. A paralysis more painful than any it has yet experienced must creep over and further afflict the fabric of a broken society ere it can be rebuilt and regenerated.”

Integration

“The principle of the Oneness of Mankind ... has its indirect manifestations in the gradual diffusion of the spirit of world solidarity which is spontaneously arising out of the welter of a disorganized society.”

Shoghi Effendi, 1931, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* pp. 43-44

Integration

“There have been at least three historical moments in the last one hundred years when it seemed as if the human race was reaching for real, lasting peace....

- The first moment... was the establishment of the League of Nations, an organization intended by its founders to secure peace at the international level.
- the second... was the United Nations Organization formed from the ashes of the League
- towards the end of the twentieth century... the third moment when universal peace seemed to be within grasp [gave] rise to explicit calls for the establishment of a new global order.

These various advances... stand... as signs of a widespread, gradual but inexorable rise in global consciousness on the part of the earth's peoples and their attraction to universal justice, to solidarity, to collaboration, to compassion, and to equality.”

Disintegration

“As the present century opened, new challenges began to loom.

- many of the dominant currents in societies everywhere are pushing people apart, not drawing them together
- political and economic systems have enabled the enrichment of small coteries with grossly exorbitant wealth
- the interactions of the individual citizen, governing institutions, and society as a whole are often fraught [by] more and more intransigence in their thinking
- Religious fundamentalism is warping the character of communities, even nations
- the failings of so many organizations and institutions of society have understandably led to a decline in public trust
- systematically exploited by vested interests seeking to undermine the credibility of all sources of knowledge
- certain shared ethical principles...are eroded, threatening the prevailing consensus about right and wrong
- the will to engage in international collective action... has been cowed, assailed by resurgent forces of racism, nationalism, and factionalism.”

Disintegration and integration

“Thus do the forces of disintegration regroup and gain ground. So be it. The unification of humanity is unstoppable by any human force; the promises made by the prophets of old and by the Author of the Cause of God Himself testify to this truth. Yet the course humanity takes to achieve its destiny may very well be tortuous. The tumult raised by the contending peoples of the earth threatens to drown out the voices of those noble-minded souls in every society who call for an end to conflict and struggle. As long as that call goes unheeded, there is no reason to doubt that the world’s current state of disorder and confusion will worsen—possibly with catastrophic consequences—until a chastened humanity sees fit to take another significant step, perhaps this time decisive, towards enduring peace.”

The need for unity

“Seldom has it been more evident that society’s collective strength is dependent on the unity it can manifest in action, from the international stage to the grassroots...”

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

A positive approach

“In a day such as this, when the tempests of trials and tribulations have encompassed the world, and fear and trembling have agitated the planet, ye must rise above the horizon of firmness and steadfastness with illumined faces and radiant brows in such wise that, God willing, the gloom of fear and consternation may be entirely obliterated, and the light of assurance may dawn above the manifest horizon and shine resplendently.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá)

“The world stands more and more in need of the hope and the strength of spirit that faith imparts.”

A positive approach

“The elevated conversations... have been a source of comfort and inspiration to many. Such efforts on your part provide a valuable service at this hour when many souls are perplexed and dismayed, unsure of what will be. 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.”

Hope

“The expectation we expressed... that this test of humanity’s endurance would grant it greater insight is already being realized. Leaders, prominent thinkers, and commentators have begun to explore fundamental concepts and bold aspirations that, in recent times, have been largely absent from public discourse. At present these are but early glimmerings, yet they hold out the possibility that a moment of collective consciousness may be in view.”

World unity

“World unity is finally possible. A global order that unifies the nations with the assent of humanity is the only adequate answer to the destabilizing forces that threaten the world.

“However, though world unity is possible—nay, inevitable—it ultimately cannot be achieved without unreserved acceptance of the oneness of humankind.”