

Achieving Peace

Part 2 – Steps to Peace

Sustainable Development Goal 16

Issues for Discourse with Youth

Bahá'í Discourse – Peace 2

Religion and Peace

They that are possessed of wealth and invested with authority and power must show the profoundest regard for religion. In truth, religion is a radiant light and an impregnable stronghold for the protection and welfare of the peoples of the world, for the fear of God impelleth man to hold fast to that which is good, and shun all evil. Should the lamp of religion be obscured, chaos and confusion will ensue, and the lights of fairness and justice, of tranquillity and peace cease to shine. Unto this will bear witness every man of true understanding.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 125)

Supreme Tribunal

A Supreme Tribunal shall be established by the peoples and Governments of every nation, composed of members elected from each country and Government. The members of this Great Council shall assemble in unity. All disputes of an international character shall be submitted to this Court, its work being to arrange by arbitration everything which otherwise would be a cause of war. The mission of this Tribunal would be to prevent war.

Achieving Universal Peace

True civilization will unfurl its banner in the midmost heart of the world whenever a certain number of its distinguished and high-minded sovereigns—the shining exemplars of devotion and determination—shall, for the good and happiness of all mankind, arise, with firm resolve and clear vision, to establish the Cause of Universal Peace.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), pp. 64-67)

Achieving Universal Peace

They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consultation, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), pp. 64-67)

Achieving Peace

This supreme and noble undertaking—the real source of the peace and well-being of all the world—should be regarded as sacred by all that dwell on earth. All the forces of humanity must be mobilized to ensure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), pp. 64-67)

Achieving Peace

In this all-embracing Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation should be clearly fixed, the principles underlying the relations of governments towards one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and obligations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the armaments of every government should be strictly limited, for if the preparations for war and the military forces of any nation should be allowed to increase, they will arouse the suspicion of others.

Achieving Peace

The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government. Should this greatest of all remedies be applied to the sick body of the world, it will assuredly recover from its ills and will remain eternally safe and secure.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), pp. 64-67)

Achieving Peace

Observe that if such a happy situation be forthcoming, no government would need continually to pile up the weapons of war, nor feel itself obliged to produce ever new military weapons with which to conquer the human race. A small force for the purposes of internal security, the correction of criminal and disorderly elements and the prevention of local disturbances, would be required—no more.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), pp. 64-67)

Achieving Peace

In this way the entire population would, first of all, be relieved of the crushing burden of expenditure currently imposed for military purposes, and secondly, great numbers of people would cease to devote their time to the continual devising of new weapons of destruction—those testimonials of greed and bloodthirstiness, so inconsistent with the gift of life—and would instead bend their efforts to the production of whatever will foster human existence and peace and well-being, and would become the cause of universal development and prosperity.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), pp. 64-67)

Achieving Peace

A conquest can be a praiseworthy thing, and there are times when war becomes the powerful basis of peace, and ruin the very means of reconstruction. If, for example, a high-minded sovereign marshals his troops to block the onset of the insurgent and the aggressor, or again, if he takes the field and distinguishes himself in a struggle to unify a divided state and people, if, in brief, he is waging war for a righteous purpose, then this seeming wrath is mercy itself, and this apparent tyranny the very substance of justice and this warfare the cornerstone of peace. Today, the task befitting great rulers is to establish universal peace, for in this lies the freedom of all peoples.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), pp. 70-71)

Achieving Peace

It is clear from what has already been said that man's glory and greatness do not consist in his being avid for blood and sharp of claw, in tearing down cities and spreading havoc, in butchering armed forces and civilians. What would mean a bright future for him would be his reputation for justice, his kindness to the entire population whether high or low, his building up countries and cities, villages and districts, his making life easy, peaceful and happy for his fellow beings, his laying down fundamental principles for progress, his raising the standards and increasing the wealth of the entire population.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), pp. 64-67, 70-71)

Palais
des
Nations

Geneva



The Promise of World Peace

Banning nuclear weapons, prohibiting the use of poison gases, or outlawing germ warfare will not remove the root causes of war. However important such practical measures are in a peace process, they are too superficial to exert lasting influence. Peoples are ingenious enough to invent other forms of warfare, and to use food, raw materials, finance, industrial power, ideology, and terrorism to subvert one another for supremacy and dominion.

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

The Promise of World Peace

Racism, one of the most persistent evils, is a major barrier to peace. It is too outrageous a violation of the dignity of human beings. Racism slows the unfoldment of the boundless potentialities of its victims, corrupts those who practice it, and hurts human progress. Recognition of the oneness of mankind, implemented by appropriate legal measures, must be universal if this problem is to be overcome.

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

The Promise of World Peace

The extreme difference between rich and poor, a source of acute suffering, keeps the world in a state of instability, virtually on the edge of war. Few societies have dealt effectively with this. The solution calls for the combined application of spiritual, moral and practical approaches.

The Promise of World Peace

A fresh look at the problem is required, consulting experts from a wide range of disciplines, without economic and ideological arguments, and involving the people directly affected in the decisions that must urgently be made. It is an issue not only of eliminating extremes of wealth and poverty, but also of understanding those spiritual truths which can produce a new universal attitude. Fostering such an attitude is itself a major part of the solution.

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

The Promise of World Peace

Extreme nationalism, as distinguished from a legitimate patriotism, must give way to a wider loyalty, to the love of humanity as a whole. Baha'u'llah's statement is: "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens." The concept of world citizenship is a result of the contraction of the world into a single neighbourhood through scientific advances and the interdependence of nations.

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

The Promise of World Peace

Love of all the world's peoples does not exclude love of one's country. The advantage of the part in a world society is best served by promoting the advantage of the whole. Current international activities in various fields which create mutual affection and a sense of solidarity among peoples need greatly to be increased.

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

The Promise of World Peace

Religious conflict, throughout history, has been the cause of wars, stopped progress, and is increasingly rejected by people of all faiths and no faith. Followers of all religions must be willing to face the basic questions which this raises, and to arrive at clear answers. How are the differences between them to be resolved, both in theory and in practice?

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

The Promise of World Peace

The challenge facing the religious leaders is to contemplate, with hearts filled with compassion and a desire for truth, the plight of humanity, and to ask themselves whether they cannot, in humility, overcome their differences in a spirit of forgiveness to work together for human understanding and peace.

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

The Promise of World Peace

Freedom for women, with full equality between the sexes, is one of the most important requirements for peace. The denial of such equality is unjust to half of the world's population and promotes in men harmful attitudes and habits that are carried from the family to the workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations. There are no moral, practical, or biological justifications for such denial. Only as women are welcomed into full partnership in all fields will the moral and psychological climate be created for international peace.

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

The Promise of World Peace

Universal education, already supported by dedicated people from every faith and nation, deserves full support from the governments of the world. For ignorance is the principal reason for the decline and fall of peoples and maintaining prejudice. No nation can achieve success unless all its citizens are educated. Many nations lack the resources to do this, and must set priorities.

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

The Promise of World Peace

First priority should go to the education of women and girls, since it is through educated mothers that the benefits of knowledge can be most rapidly spread throughout society. Teaching the concept of world citizenship should be part of the standard education of every child.

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

The Promise of World Peace

World order can be founded only on a firm consciousness of the oneness of mankind, a spiritual truth which all the human sciences confirm.

Anthropology, physiology, psychology, recognize only one human species, although infinitely varied in the secondary aspects of life. Recognition of this truth requires us to abandon prejudice of every kind--race, class, colour, creed, nation, sex, degree of material civilization, everything by which people consider themselves superior to others.

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

The Promise of World Peace

Acceptance of the oneness of mankind is the first fundamental requirement for reorganization and administration of the world as one country, the home of humankind. Universal acceptance of this spiritual principle is essential to any successful attempt to establish world peace. It should therefore be universally proclaimed, taught in schools, and constantly asserted in every nation as preparation for the organic change in the structure of society which it implies.

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

The Promise of World Peace

In the Baha'i view, recognition of the oneness of mankind "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."

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

World Peace

Only when the inhabitants of the planet become conscious that they are a single people will they turn away from the conflicts of past social organisation and begin to learn to work together and forgive each other. *"The well-being of mankind," Bahá'u'lláh writes, "its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established."*

(Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, §17)