

NEW WORLD ORDER

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SEVEN LIGHTS OF UNITY

IN cycles gone by, though harmony was established, yet, owing to the absence of means, the unity of all mankind could not have been achieved. Continents remained widely divided, nay even among the peoples of one and the same continent association and interchange of thought were well nigh impossible. Consequently intercourse, understanding and unity amongst all the peoples and kindreds of the earth were unattainable. In this day, however, means of communication have multiplied, and the five continents of the earth have virtually merged into one. . . . In like manner all the members of the human family, whether peoples or governments, cities or villages, have become

increasingly interdependent. For none is self-sufficiency any longer possible, inasmuch as political ties unite all peoples and nations, and the bonds of trade and industry, of agriculture and education are being strengthened everyday. Hence the unity of all mankind can in this day be achieved. Verily this is none other but one of the wonders of this wondrous age, this glorious century. Of this past ages have been deprived, for this century—the century of light—has been endowed with unique and unprecedented glory, power and illumination. Hence the miraculous unfolding of a fresh marvel every day. Eventually it will be seen how bright its candles will burn in the assemblage of man.

Behold how its light is now dawning upon the world's darkened horizon. The first candle is unity in the political realm, the early glimmerings of which can now be discerned. The second candle is unity of thought in world undertakings, the consummation of which will ere long be witnessed. The third candle is unity in freedom which will surely come to pass. The fourth candle is unity in religion which is the cornerstone of the foundation itself, and which, by the power of God, will be revealed in all its splendour. The fifth candle is the unity of nations—a unity which in this century will be securely

established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland. The sixth candle is unity of races, making of all that dwell on earth peoples and kindreds of one race. The seventh candle is unity of language, i.e. the choice of a universal tongue in which all peoples will be instructed and converse. Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realisation.

(Extract from 'The Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá).

WORLD UNITY

World Unity is not something to be made, it is something to be realised and understood. So much honest and well-meant effort in the supposed cause of world unity has come to grief, because the engineers of those efforts dissipated their precious energies trying to achieve a task which was not theirs, and also because they lacked the necessary equipment. All these might have been detected in time, had there been the right vision of the desired goal.

World unity is not one and the same thing as that much-used and much-misused phrase, world brotherhood. The first connotes both a spiritual and a mental attitude, whereas the second, more often than not, reveals a purely emotional reaction. Again, world unity is not synonymous with even a foolproof League of Nations. No machinery of world organisation will ever weather successive storms, if its basis is nothing but political expediency. And yet again world unity and international peace are not necessarily the same fact and conception. International peace might easily be a period of lull and false security between two world-engulfing upheavals. And yet another comparison. World unity and the day-dreamings of a blissful humanity, the imaginary construction of delightful Utopias are poles apart.

You might as well ask by now, what this world unity is, so far repeated half-a-dozen times. Mere description will not suffice. It is preferable to cite some of its essential conditions. But before that, a related question needs some attention. No one in his senses, we may presume, will deny the fact that this world of ours has shrunk very considerably, and is still shrinking,

and will shrink more still, and that barriers of space if once protective, are today merely illusory. And again we may presume, that no sane person will reject the fact that if mankind fails to discover a method of checking arbitrary force and arbitrary tribal action; and if humanity allows provincial interests to override continually universal interests, mankind will lapse through a twilight of frenzy into total, unmitigated darkness. We have no need, therefore, to argue the urgent necessity of a well-understood, well-adhered, and well-functioning world unity, provided this world unity which we are to discuss, is shown to bring lasting relief to a sorely-tried, suffering humanity.

We said at the very beginning that world unity is not something to make, which meant that it can never be an artificial creation. Unity in spite of myriads of outstanding differences and diversities that enrich human life, is a fundamental fact of global existence. While this unity has always been, has always dominated the ordering of life, mankind has never been fully conscious of its force and value. Indeed the whole urge of man's social life has been towards a relatively more complete realisation of this unity. Cannot we trace in the gradual evolving from family units to tribal groupings, city-states, and national states, this ever-widening circle of consciousness? Although the life-force has carried mankind onwards through these successive stages, and although this horizon of consciousness has systematically been enlarged, man has by no means all-willingly stepped without struggle from one stage into the other. Far from it, man has even foolishly attempted to defy the impelling currents of social evolution,

has even tried in vain to wade up-stream. But once having caught the vision of the next stage, he has gone forth into it without compunction or remorse. And this onward move from lesser to wider unities, has not taken a uniform path. There have been violent breaks, yawning gaps, apparent diversions. But just the same, this reaching out from smaller to greater areas of unity, has manifested itself throughout the chequered history of the human race.

Any vital consciousness of unity demands adequate forms and outward expression. Now, the converse cannot be true. That is to say, we cannot first set up an organised unit in anticipation of a sustaining spirit, and next try to pump artificial life into it. Such an effort is bound to fail. Any organisation of any kind or description must necessarily be the embodiment of some driving, dynamic idea or belief or doctrine. Otherwise its birth will be sadly abortive. Therefore it is more than useless, it is positively dangerous to set up any scheme of world organisation without the necessary consciousness of unity to inspire its life. Organisation is all-important, it cannot be brushed aside on the plea that once human minds and hearts have received the required illumination, organisation becomes superfluous, and yet it is supremely important to realise that it is not the very first of several essentials.

Therefore to organise the life of the world in the only sane way, that is on a world basis, we require a concept wide enough to include the generality of mankind, deep enough to withstand any onslaught of contrary forces, true enough to surmount all doubts, hesitations and half-hearted attitudes, and finally powerful enough to urge and impel us to the desired objective. And this concept in view of the goal before us, can be no other than that of the fundamental oneness of mankind. Again a word of caution. This concept or consciousness of unity can neither be a mere catchword to help the achievement of an end, nor can it be an 'ignorant outburst of emotionalism'. Should it be so mistaken, the result will inevitably be fresh failures and heartbreaks, not to speak of disasters. This unity is an inherent unity. It is not something alien to be grafted on to humanity, in the belief that it will yield the necessary cure. It exists, and our task is to realise it in a rational way. But what does this 'oneness' mean and what does it imply? It has a very simple meaning, so simple indeed that it may seem to be a common platitude, and

yet how often it is either forgotten or deliberately ignored. It is this, that there is only one human species inhabiting the earth, and that distinctions of race and colour are accidental and not fundamental to human existence. But this 'oneness' is not primarily a matter of physical sameness, but of spiritual origin, and that is fundamental to human life. As we have repeatedly said, this unity is there, and has always been there, but its full realisation has never been possible as it is today. Even in distant ages, when space was a mighty barrier between different peoples, when huge tracts of the earth lay unknown and unexplored, there were men of vision who declared their belief in the kinship of all human beings. However, in the past, the world had not reached the present degree of closeness, and the space was yet to be overcome, and therefore isolationism with its corresponding mental and spiritual outlook of exclusiveness was not only natural but workable as well. Today we are faced with a totally different situation. Physically the world has reached the proportions of a single unit. It is only in the realm of human consciousness that the necessary adjustment is not made, and the complete awakening to the essential oneness of mankind is not achieved.

Experience has shown us, and is bound to show us in an increasing measure the fact of global interdependence and interaction. We are now bound to admit that whatever is dangerous and harmful to one section of humanity will eventually affect the life of the rest of mankind. We have to own that the miseries of one particular grouping of mankind will not leave the others free of their contagion. Hence, the 'Oneness of Mankind' demands a profound change in our international relationships. It becomes of paramount urgency to subordinate all sectional, provincial and exclusive interests to the security and the welfare of the entire human race. Anything that is injurious to the common weal, will in the long run hurt all nations alike, even those that reap momentary benefits from that particular course of action.

This consciousness of the oneness of mankind is essentially a spiritual attitude. At the risk of repetition, we must once again underline the fact that it is far, very far from being a vague, nebulous dream or an emotional reaction. In the light of this consciousness one comes to see that the smooth working of human affairs in every domain of human activity, be it political, industrial, economic, social or educational, is dependent on correct spiritual relationships. And then one comes to realise that

exclusiveness, provincialism and tribalism of any hue, breeds arrogance, selfishness and aggressiveness, and these evil progenies attack the fabric of society, and poison the life of one's fellow-beings, and at the end there is no individual gain for even those who either knowingly or unknowingly have let loose an avalanche of pain and misery. And not only that—all the pain, and all the ruin will come home to them. These are truths and not moralising.

A world society embodying a keen consciousness of the 'Oneness of Mankind' is that world unity for which we have, in varying degrees of awareness, been groping, at least in the last twenty-five years. So much effort was wasted in this quest because men failed to understand that the prime requisite is a full awakening to the oneness of the human race to the complete interdependence of all human life. There the world went wrong, and the world is paying the penalty for its spiritual blindness. The world society that will sooner or later emerge, will seek and establish such institutions that will best incarnate the spirit of unity. It will organise not for the sake of mere organising, not because it regards organisation as the end of all striving, but for the purpose of giving full scope and expression to the faith that has occasioned its birth—the faith in the 'Oneness of Mankind', a faith which is 'conscious knowledge'. This world society will reflect the inherent dignity of human life. In it there will be no room for selfish exploitation, tyranny and imposition, because its moving spirit is a flaming awareness of one humanity.

This is not a sketch of a Utopia. We have not declared for a world in which there will be no vestige of evil: for that would be a Utopia indeed. We have neither maintained that the oneness of mankind implies uniformity and sameness: for that would be both undesirable and impracticable. And still more, we have not assumed that all men are at the same level of development, for that would be sheer folly. A great deal is left to be done to raise the standards of education and development. A world society which is imbued with the spirit of unity will consider itself the trustee whose task it is to heighten the physical, the moral, the intellectual, and the spiritual standards of the peoples. It will be firm where firmness is required, not in the way of vindictiveness, but in the belief that the ills of a part will become the ills of the whole. It will harness force to serve the ends of justice and righteousness. It will not ignore the fact that the elimination of force will spell anarchy, just as its wrong use does, and will subject the employment of force in the international field to the collective sanction of the human race.

Eighty years ago Bahá'u'lláh brought to the world both the vision and the promise of this mighty achievement. He, the divine Physician, diagnosed the primary disease afflicting the body-politic and prescribed the remedy. Bahá'u'lláh asserted in no uncertain terms that such a consummation is inevitable, that the road to it is strewn with bitter experience, that only through a power born of God, can man attain the summit of his glory.

THE WORLD COMMONWEALTH

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 visualise 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 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. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. A mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve centre of a world civilisation,

the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energising influences will radiate. A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind. In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will co-operate, and will harmoniously develop. The Press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples. The economic resources of the world will be organised, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilised, its markets will be co-ordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

National rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and co-operation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on

the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. 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 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.

A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.

(Excerpt from 'The Unfoldment of World Civilisation,' by Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.)

EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

ALL men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilisation. The Almighty beareth Me witness: To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth.

They whom God hath endowed with insight will readily recognise that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples. He that turneth away from them, is accounted among the abject and foolish. We, verily, have commanded you to refuse

the dictates of your evil passions and corrupt desires, and not to transgress the bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed, for these are the breath of life unto all created things. The seas of Divine wisdom and divine utterance have risen under the breath of the breeze of the All-Merciful. Hasten to drink your fill, O men of understanding! They that have violated the Covenant of God by breaking His commandments, and have turned back on their heels, these have erred grievously in the sight of God, the All-Possessing, the Most High.

The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as

strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree,
and the leaves of one branch. We cherish
the hope that the light of justice may shine
upon the world and sanctify it from
tyranny. If the rulers and kings of the
earth, the symbols of the power of God,
exalted be His glory, arise and resolve to
dedicate themselves to whatever will
promote the highest interests of the whole
of humanity, the reign of justice will
assuredly be established amongst the
children of men, and the effulgence of its
light will envelop the whole earth. The
Great Being saith: The structure of world
stability and order hath been reared upon,
and will continue to be sustained by, the

twin pillars of reward and punishment.
. . . Take heed, O concourse of the rulers
of the world! There is no force on earth
that can equal in its conquering power the
force of justice and wisdom. . . . Blessed
is the king who marcheth with the ensign
of wisdom unfurled before him, and the
battalions of justice massed in his rear.
He verily is the ornament that adorneth
the brow of peace the countenance of
security. There can be doubt whatever
that if the day star of justice, which
the clouds of tyranny have obscured,
were to shed its light upon men, the
face of the earth would be completely
transformed.

THE DAY OF GOD

Be of good cheer!

What but the glory of the Light of
Light
Could cast such shadows on a world
forlorn?
If our hearts whispered not the hope of
morn
Would we so hate the horror of the
night?
What is it else than desperate bitter
fear
That drives the troops of evil, who know
well
Their hour is come, to vent their dying
rage
Upon the people of this heaven-lit
age
And seek by every means they may to
sell
Their lost dominion dear?

Be of good cheer!

The very depth of our perplexity
Amid this whirling world of strife and care
Where disillusion beckons to despair
Is of itself a call for help, a cry
That angels' hearts will not be slow to hear.
For it is ever in such a time as ours,
When man has ransacked sea and land for
rest
And never sought the heaven in his own
breast,
That God reveals once more His hidden
powers

And in His might draws near.

Be of good cheer!

Though all things change, Truth's king-
dom is secure.
The forms of faith come, go, and are
forgot,
But that which they enshrine can perish
not.
Altars may crumble, worship will endure.
Those holy things that God bids man
revere
Reign on unchecked by man's satanic will;
Wisdom and love are of a higher birth
Than these frail phantom forces of the
earth
And take their deathless power from Him
Whose will
Above all things stands clear.

Be of good cheer!

What kings desired in vain God gives to you
And in this wondrous day before our eyes
Unseals His ancient book of mysteries
Making all things on earth and heaven
new.
Truth hath come down from some far-
flaming sphere;
Lo, in our midst her sacred fires burn!
And see—trace back these countless rays of
light
To the One Point wherein they all unite,
And bow your forehead in the dust to
know
That God Himself is here!

G. TOWNSHEND

THE NEW HUMANITY

WHEN modern civilisation shifted its centre from agriculture to industry, from manual labour to the power-driven machine, our social life was shaken to its very foundations. In large measure, the international upheavals and the internal troubles which afflict all peoples today are the results of this profound change and as we come to understand better its true significance, how far-reaching, how revolutionary its influence has been, the conclusion seems inescapable that these difficulties not only will continue, but in all probability will increase, until a new foundation has been discovered and been laid that will support the structure of this new and larger civilisation.

One of its most conspicuous effects has been to introduce into human affairs two new and vital elements. On the one hand it has broken down the walls of isolation and self-sufficiency which characterised society throughout the long era of agricultural economy; on the other hand it has brought a truly titanic extension and reinforcement to the human personality. . . .

What, then, is the significance of the entry of these two elements into our social life? It means that man's most challenging, his most dangerous environment today is no longer nature; it is his fellow men.

Today our lives are immersed in the movements of society as the lives of our forefathers were immersed in the conditions of nature. With every betterment in civilisation, we advance. With every breakdown in civilisation, whether by war, revolution or industrial conflict, we are thrown back to poverty and helplessness. Our utmost hope and our deepest dread both depend upon the direction and movement of a society that has come to include all mankind. This means that the

highest intelligence which we can muster should be set to work to discover and formulate the laws of right human relationships with the same intensity that, in previous ages, that intelligence was employed in the investigation of the laws of nature. Just as ignorance of those laws produced the calamities of famine and pestilence in former days which destroyed entire tribes and communities, so continued ignorance of social laws and principles can and will today inevitably produce the larger famine of revolution, the more universal pestilence of international war. And events seem to be drawing to a climax. The time in which to find and to act upon the true principles of human association may well be less than we know.

It is at this very point of world crisis, in the confusion and uncertainty of this possible turning point in our destiny, that the Bahá'í teachings have come to shed their clear and penetrating light. What is essential today, they explain is an inner vision and outlook freed from the limitations of the past. To be alive in this new age, and to take full advantage of its opportunities, we must learn to think with an unprejudiced mind, and to feel in terms of brotherhood. We must realise that as aeroplane, radio and other instruments have crossed the frontiers drawn upon the map, so our sympathy and spirit of oneness 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.

(Extracts from a series of talks given over Station WHN, New York, February, 1937. Quoted in 'Bahá'í World,' Vol. VII.)

EDITOR'S NOTE

IN July 1941 we ceased publication but promised to resume our task before long. Here we are back again in a new form. This issue has one central theme, the supreme question of World Unity. Other issues will in a similar way contain a central theme, together with additional material. We welcome and greatly appreciate letters from our readers, and hope to be favoured with their views.

Our yearly subscription rate is one shilling and sixpence post paid, which our readers may find it convenient to remit in postage stamps.

THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

THE Báb, The Forerunner, declaration
1844, martyrdom 1850.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Founder, declaration
1863, ascended 1892.

'Abdu'l-Bahá,' The True Exemplar and
Interpreter, 1844-1921.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

The Oneness of Mankind.

The Oneness of Religion.

The Independent Investigation of
Truth.

The Relinquishing of Prejudices.

Education for Everyone.

Equal Status for Men and Women.

The Harmony of Religion and Science.

Solution of Industrial and Economic
Problems.

A Universal Language. (Auxiliary.)

Universal Peace; international executive
authority.

A World Commonwealth.