

The Destiny of America and The Promise of World Peace

At this time of world turmoil,
the United States Bahá'í community
offers a perspective on the destiny of America
as the promoter of world peace.

More than a hundred years ago, Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, addressing heads of state, proclaimed that the age of maturity for the entire human race had come. The unity of humankind was now to be established as the foundation of the great peace that would mark the highest stage in humanity's spiritual and social evolution. Revolutionary and world-shaking changes were therefore inevitable.

The Bahá'í teachings state:

The world is moving on. Its events are unfolding ominously and with bewildering rapidity. The whirlwind of its passions is swift and alarmingly violent. The New World is insensibly drawn into its vortex. . . . Dangers, undreamt of and unpredictable, threaten it both from within and from without. Its governments and peoples are being gradually enmeshed in the coils of the world's recurrent crises and fierce controversies. . . . The world is contracting into a neighborhood. America, willingly or unwillingly, must face and grapple with this new situation. For purposes of national security, let alone any humanitarian motive, she must assume the obligations imposed by this newly created neighborhood. Paradoxical as it may seem, her only hope of extricating herself from the perils gathering around her is to become entangled in that very web of international association which the Hand of an inscrutable Providence is weaving.

The American nation, Bahá'ís believe, will evolve, through tests and trials to become a land of spiritual distinction and leadership, a champion of justice and unity among all peoples and nations, and a powerful servant of the cause of everlasting peace. This is the peace promised by God in the sacred texts of the world's religions.

Establishing peace is not simply a matter of signing treaties and protocols; it is a complex task requiring a new level of commitment to resolving issues not customarily associated with the pursuit of peace.

Universal acceptance of the spiritual principle of the oneness of humankind is essential to any successful attempt to establish world peace.

Racism, one of the most baneful and persistent evils, is a major barrier to peace.

The emancipation of women, the achievement of full equality of the sexes, is one of the most important, though less acknowledged, prerequisites of peace.

The inordinate disparity between rich and poor keeps the world in a state of instability, preventing the achievement of peace.

Unbridled nationalism, as distinguished from a sane and legitimate patriotism, must give way to a wider loyalty, to the love of humanity as a whole.

Religious strife, the cause of innumerable wars and conflicts throughout history, is a major obstacle to progress. The challenge facing the world's religious leaders is to contemplate, with hearts filled with compassion and the desire for truth, the plight of humanity, and to ask themselves whether they cannot, in humility before their God, submerge their theological differences in a great spirit of mutual forbearance that will enable them to work together for the advancement of human understanding and peace.

Bahá'ís pray, "May this American Democracy be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement. May it be the first nation to proclaim the unity of mankind. May it be the first to unfurl the standard of the Most Great Peace."

During this hour of crisis, we affirm our abiding faith in the destiny of America. We know that the road to its destiny is long, thorny and tortuous, but we are confident that America will emerge from her trials undivided and undefeatable.

—National Spiritual Assembly of the
Bahá'ís of the United States

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The Promise of World Peace

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