

Our Turbulent Times

1. Social
2. Political
3. Religious
4. Economic
5. Environmental

NEGATIVE MINDSETS

We are VICTIMS

..... and therefore helpless and apathetic

Or

We are ANGRY

..... prone to aggression, conflict, and defiance

What if this were all part of a GREATER PLAN?

”Such simultaneous processes of rise and fall, of integration and disintegration, of order and chaos, with their continuous and reciprocal reactions on each other, are but aspects of a greater Plan, one and indivisible, whose Source is God, whose author is Baha’u’llah, the theater of whose operations is the entire planet, and whose ultimate objectives are the unity of the human race and the peace of all mankind.”

Shoghi Effendi, *Advent of Divine Justice*

An illuminating thought for those of us in the United States

”The woes and tribulations which threaten it [the American nation] are partly avoidable, but mostly inevitable and God-sent..”

Shoghi Effendi, Citadel of Faith

Why does the US have to suffer such woes?

Because:

“a government and people clinging tenaciously to the obsolescent doctrine of absolute sovereignty..”;

AND

“... upholding a political system manifestly at variance with the needs of a world already contracted into a neighborhood and crying out for unity”

MUST BE

“purged of its anachronistic conceptions”

and

“prepared to play a preponderating role... in hoisting the standard of the Lesser Peace, in the unification of mankind, and in the establishment of a world federal government on this planet.”

Shoghi Effendi, Citadel of Faith

Simultaneous Process of INTEGRATION and DISINTEGRATION

“A two-fold process..can be distinguished, each tending in its own way and with an accelerated momentum, to bring to a climax the forces that are transforming the face of our planet. The first is essentially an integrating process, while the second is fundamentally disruptive.”

Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Baha'u'llah

VALUABLE OPPORTUNITIES INHERENT IN THE TURBULENCE

1. Release the “potentialities inherent in the station of man”
2. Reveal “the full measure of his [man’s] destiny on earth, the innate excellence of his reality.” (Peace Statement)
3. Infuse in us the capacity, virtues, powers, moral standards and tools to achieve our rightful destiny.
4. “...tear down ...the antiquated barriers that seek to block humanity’s progress towards its destined goal.” (Shoghi Effendi in World Order)
5. Proclaim the death-pangs of the old order while preparing us to give birth to the new: “The whole earth is now in a state of pregnancy. The day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits.”
(Gleanings)
6. Instill the sense of responsibility needed in our leaders (Shoghi Effendi in World Order of Baha’u’llah)

Take Full Advantage of these Opportunities

“The **undreamt-of-opportunities** offered through the operation of this Force, the American believers must now rise, and **fully and courageously exploit.**”

Shoghi Effendi, Advent of Divine Justice

A Third Process

Lies between the twin processes of integration and disintegration.

and

Will lead us to the LESSER PEACE:

“Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace, hold ye fast unto this, the Lesser Peace that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents” (Tablets of Baha’u’llah)

THE LESSER PEACE

involves “the political unification of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres,

“the emergence of a world government,” and

“the establishment of the Lesser peace as foreshadowed by the Prophet Isaiah” (Citadel of Faith)

And includes:

- A call to limit arms

- Meeting of a group of rulers with aim of establishing peace

 - Recognition of the need for consultation among nations

 - Implementing the principle of collective security

Description of the Process Leading to, and Features of, the Lesser Peace

“Clearly the emergence of the Lesser Peace will be a gradual process and its various stages will no doubt witness tests and setbacks, as well as great advances. It will certainly include, however, a development of historic importance: that point at which the majority of the world’s nation-states formally commit themselves to a global order comprising institutions and laws, and equipped with the means by which collective decisions can be enforced. While we cannot at present foresee the precise form that this development will take, much less the point at which it will occur, we recognize that it is a feature of the process of the Lesser Peace.” (UHJ Letter of April 2001 to an individual)

What We Can and Ought to Do to Hasten the
Lesser Peace

CHANGE OUR PERCEPTION OF REALITY from a negative
to a positive one

Change our Limiting Beliefs and Interpretations

“What we witness at the present time.. is the adolescent stage in the slow and painful evolution of humanity, preparatory to the attainment of the stage of manhood, the stage of maturity...”

Shoghi Effendi, Promised Day is Come

Humanity is a Single Organism

“Regard the world as the human body which, though created whole and perfect, has been afflicted through divers causes, with grave ills and maladies...”

Baha'u'llah quoted in World Order of Baha'u'llah

Need New Institutions of Global Governance Fit for This New Age

They encompass new collective decision-making and enforcement institutions including:

- A World Parliament
- A World Executive
- A Permanent Standing Force
- An International Tribunal

They are all essential for achieving a permanent **PEACE**

Need for Global Ethics

“Leaders of governments and all in authority would be well served in their efforts to solve problems if they would first seek to identify the principles involved and then be guided by them.”

Universal House of Justice, Peace Statement

In the Throes of Collective Tests

“This judgment of God... is both a retributory calamity and an act of holy and supreme discipline. It is at once a visitation from God and a cleansing process for all mankind..... Mankind is being simultaneously called upon to give account of its past actions, and is being purged and prepared for its future mission. It can neither escape the responsibilities of the past, nor shirk those of the future.”

Shoghi Effendi, Promised Day is Come

The role of suffering

“Nothing but a fiery ordeal out of which humanity will emerge, chastened and prepared can succeed in implanting that sense of responsibility which the leaders of a new-born age must arise to shoulder.”

Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Baha'u'llah

Change in our Conception of Society

“Adversity will be prolonged, worldwide, allied to chaos and universal destruction.... [it will]..**stir the conscience of the world**, disillusion the masses, **precipitate a radical change in the very conception of society** and coalesce ultimately the disjointed, the bleeding limbs of mankind into one body, singly, organically united and indivisible.”

Shoghi Effendi, Promised Day is Come

Yet... Baha'is should fear one kind of failure

“The Baha'is..should not fear the future but rather fear any failure on their part to carry out the work of the Cause.”

Shoghi Effendi, Dawn of a New Day

The friends “cannot but derive immense hope and courage” from “every fresh token of His unfailing blessing on the one hand, and of His visitation on the other...”

Shoghi Effendi, Advent of Divine Justice

SEE OPPORTUNITIES INSTEAD OF PROBLEMS

“The afflictions which come to humanity sometimes tend to center the consciousness upon the limitations. This is a veritable prison. Release comes by making of the will a door through which the confirmations of the spirit come.”

Abdu'l-Baha, Divine Philosophy

CONSTRUCTIVE WAYS TO EXERCISE
OUR FREE WILL

Build a Just World -- the Only Basis for Peace

“Small wonder, therefore, that the Author of the Baha’i Revelation should have chosen...to have made justice **the only basis** and **the permanent foundation** of His Most Great Peace...”

Shoghi Effendi, Advent of Divine Justice

“The purpose of Justice is the appearance of unity among men.”

Baha’u’llah, Tablets

Ensure Women Fully Participate in All Spheres of Society

Woman “**will be** the greatest factor in establishing universal peace and international arbitration.”

“Assuredly woman **will abolish** warfare among mankind”

War **will cease** “when women participate fully and equally in the affairs of the world, when they enter confidently and capably the great arena of laws and politics.”

Abdu’l-Baha, Promulgation of Universal Peace

REPLACE OLD HABITS WITH NEW CONSTRUCTIVE ONES

“If long-cherished ideals and time-honored institutions, if certain social assumptions and religious formulae have ceased to promote the welfare of the generality of mankind, if they no longer minister to the needs of a continually evolving humanity, let them be swept away and relegated to the limbo of obsolescent and forgotten doctrines..... For legal standards, political and economic theories are solely designed to safeguard the interest of humanity as a whole, and not humanity to be crucified for the preservation of the integrity of any particular law or doctrine.”

Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Baha'u'llah

EXAMPLES OF HABITS THAT NO LONGER SERVE US

1. Isolation that leads to fragmentation
2. Nationalism
3. Expediency
4. Distrustful attitudes towards authority
5. Electing Leaders that lack qualities we need
6. Blindly following and believing what we hear
7. Failure to correctly educate public opinion

THE MOST GREAT PEACE

The ultimate PRIZE and GOAL of Baha'u'llah's Revelation.