



Message to the Youth

Ludwig Tuman

We live in a time of great challenges – and opportunities. You, the youth of the world, have the power to turn around the ship of humanity. With every passing year, your numbers and your influence increase.

You have the power to move humanity to deal with the climate crisis, and eventually to heal the climate. The power to restore harmony in our relationship with nature. The power to protect the world's one million endangered species. The power to redefine power itself not as the threat of force, but as the ability to bring out the best in people.

You have the power to spread human rights. The power to make justice the reigning principle in every aspect of society. The power to bring about racial justice and unity. The power to ensure that women and men are given equal opportunities, and that girls have access to equal education. The power to shape an economy that abolishes extremes of wealth and poverty. The power to dissolve prejudices of every kind. And even the power to establish peace as an active, permanent condition among nations.

But to enter fully into this power, and to exercise it wisely, certain conditions need first to be met.

First, humanity needs to understand that all our problems are fundamentally spiritual in nature. Injustice, prejudice, greed, abuse and destruction are just the shadows cast by the lack of spiritual qualities – love, justice, generosity, compassion, kindness and unity.

Second, we need to seek whatever will help these positive spiritual qualities to increase and spread throughout humanity. Across history, this has been the essential purpose of the world's great religions, as taught by their founders such as Krishna, Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and today, Baha'u'llah. If we look past man - made rituals, creeds, prejudices and superstitions; if we look instead at the actual teachings of these divine Monarchs of Love, we will find that they bring us to a point of unity. All of them call on us to treat our fellow human beings with love, respect, and justice.

Third, we need to understand that the world's urgent challenges – from peace to climate change – can be resolved only through global cooperation. But such cooperation is hindered by a lack of unity in purpose and vision. To achieve unity, an important first step is to learn to see all of humankind as one family and one global community.

These two realities – the spiritual nature of human life and the oneness of humanity – form the bedrock for the new civilization we are called on to build. They provide the key to solving the world's great challenges. The oneness of humanity needs to be promoted in the arts, proclaimed in all nations, and taught in all schools.

To inspire you in your efforts to bring about positive change in the world, let me close by sharing with you a passage written by Baha'u'llah in the 1800s:

“Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility.”