

### ***Section H1: Religion and Social Responsibility***

“ The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity. This is the straight path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation the chances and the changes of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure.

Our hope is that the world’ religious leaders and the rulers thereof will unitedly arise to the reformation of this age and rehabilitation of its fortunes. Let them meditating on its needs counsel together, and through an anxious and full delioberation administer to the deceased and sorely-afflicted the remedy it requires”

*(Gleanings from the writings of Baha’u’llah )*

### ***Section H2 : Religion and the environment***

“We can not segregate the human heart from the environment outside us and say once one is reformed everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world. His inner life moulds the environment and his self is deeply affected by it. The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions. Humankind has a faculty that plants and animals do not have ; the power to discover the secret of nature;”

Baha’is believe that humans therefore have the responsibility to use this power only in a positive way, to ensure that balance is maintained in the world.

“ Mankind is generally waking up to what people with insight, and those most directly suffering have known for years- that we are rapidly destroying our natural environment. There are many causes for this , including lack of unity amongst mankind, lack of a common philosophy of life, lack of political maturity, the existence of poverty and exploitation, the division of the world in rival countries , and unjust economical system etc. It is obvious to any concerned person that if we solved the problems stated above- in

other words created fairer and more rational systems of economics, administration and justice- the destruction of the environment could be halted and be rapidly thrown into reverse”

### ***Section H3: Religion: Peace and Conflict***

“Banning Nuclear Weapons, prohibiting the use of poison gases, or outlawing germ warfare will not resolve the root cause of war. However important such practical measures obviously are as elements of the peace process, they are in themselves too superficial to exert enduring influence. People are ingenious enough to invent yet other forms of warfare, and to use food, raw material, finance, industrial power, ideology and terrorism to subvert one another in an endless quest for supremacy and dominion. There is also no lack of recognition by the national leaders of the world-wide character of the problem

There is however a paralysis of will, rooted in the deep seated conviction of the quarrelsomeness of mankind, led to the reluctance to entertain the possibility of subordinating national self-interest to the requirements of world order”.

In order to achieve world peace the causes of world conflicts have to be removed

The disparity between rich and poor, a source of acute suffering, keeps the world in a state of instability. The solution calls for the combined application of spiritual, moral and practical approaches.

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

The challenge facing the religious leaders is to contemplate with hearts filled with the spirit of compassion and a desire for truth the plight of humanity, and to ask themselves whether they can not, in humility before the Almighty Creator, 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.

The advancement of full equality between the sexes is one of the most important prerequisites of peace. The denial of such equality is an injustice against half of the world's population.

The cause of universal education deserves the utmost support that the governments of the world can lend to it. No nation can achieve success unless education is accorded to all its citizens. Consideration should also be given to teaching the concept of world citizenship as part of the standard education of every child in keeping with the requirements of our times.

A fundamental lack of communication between people seriously undermines efforts towards world peace. Adopting an international auxiliary language would go far to resolving this problem.

*(from "The promise of World Peace by Universal House of Justice )*

#### ***Section H4- Crime and Punishment***

“In the conduct of life, man is actuated by two main motives:

The hope of reward and the fear of punishment

There are two safeguards that protect humans from doing wrong; one is the law of the land which punishes the criminal, the other is the religion of God which trains humans, educates morals, spiritualises, so that humans will look at crime as a disgrace and in itself the harshest punishment.

This hope and this fear are greatly taken into account by the responsible authorities of the land who consult together for the framing of the law of the land who consult together for framing the law of the land, and who provide for their just administration. However in unjust governments carried on by men without Divine Faith, where no fear of spiritual retribution exists, the execution of the law is tyrannical and unjust. But when a ruler knows that his judgement will be weighed in a balance by a Divine Judge, and as he sows he must reap, such a man will surely avoid injustice and tyranny. The laws of God are not imposition of will, or power, or pleasure, but the resolutions of truth, reason and justice. The moral laws of religion are eternal but the social laws change with the conditions of the change of the society.

The object of punishment is not vengeance, but the prevention of crime. If a person commits a crime against you, you do not have the right to revenge, but the law of the land must punish him in order to prevent the repetition of the same crime by others, as the pain of the individual is unimportant besides the general welfare of the people. The community has no ill-will in the infliction of punishment, and it does not desire to appease the anger of the heart; its purpose by punishment is to protect others, so that no atrocious actions may be committed.

Thus when Christ said: “whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left one also”, it was for the purpose of teaching men not to take personal revenge. He did not mean that if a wolf should fall upon a flock of sheep and wish to destroy it, that the wolf should be encouraged to do so. No, if Christ had known that a wolf had entered the fold and was about to destroy the sheep, most certainly He would have prevented it.

The communities are day and night occupied in making penal laws, and in preparing and organising instruments and means of punishment. They build prisons, make chains and fetters, and different kinds of hardships and tortures, and think by these means to discipline criminals ; whereas in reality they are causing destruction of morals and perversion of characters. The community, on the contrary, ought by day and night to strive and endeavour with the utmost zeal and effort to accomplish the education of men, to cause them day by day to progress and to increase in science and knowledge, to acquire virtues, to gain good morals and to avoid vices, so that crimes may not occur.

*(from Some Answered Questions by Abdul-Baha )*