

Prosperity of Humankind Study Outline

Exported from Holy-Writings.com on 2026-07-05 — 1 clipping

(note: section titles are not official titles)

Introduction Oneness of Humanity

Justice (including human rights)

Redefinition of human relationships (Consultation)

Expand of Human Consciousness - Science and Religion

Economics

Power and Authority

(Note: bolding and underlining have been used to quickly capture the topic and/or the most important information. This marking may be especially useful when scanning the outline, for the first time, or upon review, in that it enables one to quickly review the main points and see the structure underlying the text (without needing to reread the whole text again). It may thus enable one to memorize the main points as a preparation for the speech and/or, while giving a speech, to quickly access a main point if one has forgotten it. Some abbreviations such as "int'l" for "international" may have been kept in order to limit the expanse of the visual field and thus ease the burden on one's short-term memory.)

(Though the outline is fairly detailed (though possibly unclear in parts), it attempts to serve its purpose by positioning the text in a more readily viewed and memorizable fashion.)

(Though the outline's content may be somewhat sketchy in parts, it is hoped that the links should make it easier to clarify the intent of the original.)

Prosperity of Humankind

0. Introduction - par 1

A. Peace is now taking on form & substance. (unimaginable a decade ago)

Peace IS clearly possible

(self-defeating to deny - see Promise of World Peace for hope in Bahá'u'lláh's promise of it being possible now as a turning point in history (see Turning Point for all Nations)¹. Seemingly immovable obstacles to consultation and unified int'l action have collapsed.

a. Apparently irreconcilable conflicts have surrendered to consultation and resolution processes.

b. A willingness to counter military aggression through unified int'l action is emerging.

2. This is occurring to an extent unimaginable a decade ago.

3. This has awakened a nearly extinguished hopefulness about our planet's future.

a. This is true for both the masses and world leaders.

B. The building energies must be harnessed to remove the remaining barriers.

1. Immense intellectual and spiritual energies are seeking expression throughout the world.

2. These energies are building pressure in direct proportion to the frustrations of recent decades.

a. The signs multiply everywhere that the earth's peoples yearn for an end to conflict and to the suffering and ruin from which no land is any longer immune.

3. We need to harness these energies against aggression and suffering/ruin to remove remaining barriers to global peace.

C. However, this requires a new holistic vision suited to the change of times.

1. It is not adequate to merely appeal for action against the countless ills afflicting society.

2. This requires a vision in the fullest sense of human prosperity:

a. being awakened to the spiritual and material possibilities for well-being now within grasp.

3. (The conditions must apply:)

a. to benefit everyone on the planet without distinction

b. not imposing conditions unrelated toward the fundamental goals of this reorganization.

4. Reality: a physical unification is occurring - it is the beginning of history of mankind as one people

a. although advantages have been largely unfair, now behoves us to:

1. draw on collective inheritance of genetic and cultural diversity,

2. consciously and systematically for design of future

D. Such a vision must reexamine underlying attitudes/assumptions & roles.

1. We must reexamine underlying attitudes and assumptions

a. The following must of course be examined.

1. policy, resource utilization, planning procedures, implementation methodologies, organization must be considered and affected.

b. Also, fundamental issues related to:

1. long-term goals to be pursued (purpose)

2. social structures required

3. implications for development of principles of social justice

4. nature and role of knowledge in effecting enduring change.

c. Such a re-examination will be driven to seek a broad consensus of understanding about human nature itself.

Nature and purpose of process

2. The underlying development attitudes have been based on materialistic assumptions
 - a. despite accommodation of culture & political systems, environmental concern
3. We can no longer maintain this conception of life can meet humanity's needs
 - a. given the growing gap between poor and diminishing rich
 - b. A purpose must be greater than amelioration of material conditions
 1. or it'll fail even at this
4. The answer must be sought in spiritual dimensions of life and motivation independent of:
 - a. everchanging economic scene and
 - b. false division of society into "developed" and "developing"

Protagonists

5. We need to look at the assumptions about roles in this process:
 - a. Government is of course crucial.
 1. It's puzzling that our egalitarian society thinks of mass of humanity as solely recipients of aid and training.
 2. decision-making is now
 - a. done by agencies inaccessible to them and
 - b. determined by goals irreconcilable with their perceptions of reality
 3. This is endorsed by established religion implicitly if not explicitly
 - a. Traditions of paternalism affecting religious thought incapable of translating
 1. faith in spiritual side of human nature into faith in capacity to transcend material conditions
 6. This misses fact that peoples of world are galvanized by vision of new global order
 - a. As governments are striving through UN toward this goal
 - b. Ordinary people are coming to see themselves in new light of social change
 1. abrupt in history of civilization
 - c. raises questions about role of general body of humanity in planning of planet's future

I. Oneness of Humanity - par 13

- A. "Oneness of humanity" is bedrock to engage humanity to assume responsibility
 1. Deceptively simple but raises fundamental challenges to most institutions.
- B. Materialistic interpretation of life accepts conflict as mainspring of interaction
 1. adversarial structure of civil government

2. advocacy principle informing most of civil law
3. glorification of class struggles
4. competitive spirit dominating so much of modern life

C. Bahá'u'lláh wrote in letter to Queen Victoria - one model with promise for planetary reorganization: world of humanity as one human body

1. all cells are differentiated but also complexly interdependent
2. Although each has own will & intelligence, no cell is independent whether in:
 - a. deriving benefit from or contributing to rest of organism
3. Well-being allows greater purpose: expression of human consciousness

D. The coming of age for humanity's consciousness which is now occurring will most fully express this unity in diversity as harmoniously working cells of a body.

1. Clan & tribe has progressed to forms of urban society to the nation-state : this has not been at expense of individuality
2. The scope for expression of capacities has expanded

E. This requires a reciprocal change in consciousness and institutions (the individual and society) to provide a lasting foundation.

1. Requires laws and institutions universal in character AND authority.
2. First upon decision-makers, then through education and mass media
3. Then formulate common goals and commit to attain them

F. The consciousness of one world is required to overcome ethnic and religious strife

II. Justice - par 18

A. Justice can translate consciousness of oneness into a collective will to erect structures of global community life.

B. With access to information and ideas increasing, need to submit these to candid light of justice.

1. At individual level it calls for fairmindedness & equity in one's treatment of others.
2. At group level, is necessary compass in collective decision-making.
 - a. not an encouragement of punitiveness which has been called justice
 - b. interests of individual and society are inextricably linked

C. As justice becomes a concern, a consultative climate is encouraged to examine options dispassionately

1. manipulation and partisanship are less likely to deflect the process

D. Justice protects the definition of progress from sacrificing of humanity's general well-being to advantages brought about by technology for privileged minorities.

1. Doesn't divert limited resources to extraneous essential social & economic priorities

2. Only programs which are perceived to meet their needs & equitable in objective can engage necessary commitment from masses.
3. Honesty, willingness to work, cooperation are harnessed when everyone trusts they will be equally protected and assured of benefits.

E. Human rights is at heart of this issue

1. Must be freed from false dichotomies
 - a. freedom of thought and action not the same as cult of individualism
 - b. concern for society as a whole does not deify state as source of good
 - c. These ideologies and their agendas have been main enemies to their own supposed cause.
 - d. Only in a consultative framework (conscious of organic unity) will human rights find their legitimate and creative expression.

F. Through U.N. Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights respect for social justice was given formal recognition as correlative to world peace.

1. Declaration passed without a dissenting vote - lending it growing credibility

G. Activity most linked with consciousness that distinguishes human nature is individual exploration of reality for himself or herself

1. The freedom to investigate the purpose of existence & gifts of human nature requires protection.
2. That this freedom is abused does not detract from validity of impulse

H. This impulse provides imperative for many other rights in Declaration and Covenants. These rights require guarantee.

1. Universal Education
2. Freedom of movement
3. Access to information
4. Opportunity to participate in political life

I. This protection needs to go for freedom of thought and belief, including

1. religious liberty
2. right to hold opinions and express appropriately

J. Beyond the individual are the rights based on the belief that every member of the race is a trust of the whole. These largely social and economic rights also being defined by the instruments of the U.N. include:

1. Security of the family and home
2. ownership of property
3. right to privacy

Concomitant to these are the obligations of the community:

4. provision of employment
5. mental and physical health care
6. social security
7. fair wages
8. rest and recreation
9. host of other reasonable expectations on part of individuals

K. National & International law must protect conditions essential to cultural identity.

1. Just as the advantages of a diverse gene pool, cultural diversity provides wealth which can aid social and economic development. Must be permitted to bear fruit in global civilization

a. not quenched by materialism

b. cultures must interact and change without political manipulation

c. Unity is the goal (justice is the means)

III. Redefinition of human relationships - par 29

A. What is natural and appropriate in relationships must be redefined in light of justice:

1. among human beings

2. among human beings and nature

3. between individual and society

4. between members of society and institutions

B. Progress has barely begun but will lead to:

1. new understanding of family and rights and responsibilities

2. role of women will change at every level

3. people's relation to work and place of economic activity in their lives

4. changes in governance and executing institutions

5. Work of NGO's will be rationalized.

6. binding legislation to protect environment and development needs

7. U.N. will transform to world federation with legislative, judicial, executive

C. Process required for reconceiving human relationships is consultation

1. Model based on truth-seeking cannot be reduced to negotiation or compromise (not a zero sum gain)

2. Culture of protest inhibits truth and wisest action at given moment

i. debate

ii. propaganda

iii. adversarial method

iv. entire apparatus of partisanship

3. Prerequisites of necessary transcendence of point of view for group's goals and interests include commitment to the ideals that:

a. candour and courtesy are both necessary.

b. Ideas do not belong to individual.

i. group can take up, discard, or revise as serves goal

c. All participants must support group decision regardless of one's own initial opinion.

d. An earlier decision can be reconsidered given any evidence of shortcomings.

4. Consultation is operating expression of justice

a. In social and economic development, strategy must consult with people who commit and exert for its fruition

b. "No man can attain his true station, except through his justice. No power can exist except through unity. No welfare and no well-being can be attained except through consultation." (Bahá'u'lláh)

IV. Expanse of Human Consciousness - science and religion - par 35

A. Enormous expansion in access to knowledge needed by individuals and social organizations.

1. Universal education indispensable to this if:

a. human affairs are reorganized to enable all people and groups to acquire knowledge and apply it in shaping human affairs. (relevance)

B. Consciousness has depended on two knowledge systems which have been the progenitors of civilization particularly when working independently in concert:
science and religion

1. organized our experience

2. interpreted environment

3. explored our latent powers

4. disciplined our moral and intellectual life

C. Credentials of science and technology need no elaboration. Question is how to organize activity.

1. Preserving established elites in few nations will widen already big gap.

2. Is not true development if most of humanity is considered to be users of products created elsewhere.

3. Expand activity to all segments based on capacity which implies:

a. creation of programs for those who can benefit

b. viable centres of learning

i. enhance capabilities of people to generate & apply knowledge

4. Strategy must have major goal to make it possible for all to approach processes of science and technology on an equal basis.

5. With communication technologies is now possible to bring information and training to vast numbers of people around the globe of whatever location or cultural background.

D. For vast majority of population, belief in spiritual dimension requires no demonstration, evidenced in

1. earliest records of civilization

2. cultivation for millennia by traditions of past

3. law, fine arts, civilizing of interaction: gives meaning to history

4. its influence on daily lives leading to inextinguishable and potent longings

E. Need is obvious to tap capacities so universal and creative

1. instead has been driven by materialistic world views limited to small minority

2. how can commitment to universal participation hold weight when participants' defining cultural experience is denied?

F. Resistance to inclusion of spiritual and moral issues is

1. somewhat understandable due to inhibitions and distortions in discourse on spiritual meaning by exponents of theological systems.
2. not justified as it leads to new orthodoxy that truth is amoral and facts are independent of values.

G. Despite accretions and conflict, the teachings and lives from the impulses of Figures have shown masses:

1. the capacity to love
2. discipline animal side
3. make sacrifices for common good for individuals and civilization.

H. Requires ongoing and intensifying dialogue between science and religion

1. insights and skills of science must look to force of spiritual commitment and moral principle for appropriate application. For example,
 - a. with knowledge of how to separate subjective from objective must go the devotion to truth and detachment from their own interests and passions.
 - b. science can help development by cultivating thinking in terms of process, including historically, if:
 - i. unclouded by prejudice of race, culture, sex, or sectarianism.
 - c. training to produce wealth will work if:
 - i. service to humanity is seen as purpose of individual life and its social organization.

V. Economics - par 44

A. Economic issues must be addressed in context of raising our capacity (through the expanse of our knowledge: scientific and religious).

1. Material benefits and endeavors cannot be seen as ends in themselves.
 - a. provision of basic needs of housing, food, health care, etc.
2. These extend the reach of human abilities (benefits everyone)
3. Development's purpose: lay foundations for new social order to cultivate these potentialities latent in our consciousness.

B. Challenge to economic thinking:

1. Accept that cultivation of potentialities in consciousness (with new social order as foundation) should be the purpose of development.
2. Accept its own role in creating means to achieve it.
3. Requires being freed from distracting materialistic preoccupations.
4. Requires view of ourselves as tools for achieving human well-being in fullest sense.

C. Poverty demonstrates this.

1. Proposals to eliminate poverty are based on belief that the material resources exist or can be created by scientific endeavor.
2. That this is not realized because the advances only respond tangentially to the real interests of humankind.

- a. a reordering of priorities is required dependent on quest for values by science and religion.
- b. religion must not be captivated by sectarian doctrines which:
 - i. equate contentment with passivity
 - ii. believe that poverty is an inherent feature of life
 - iii. believe that it can only be escaped in the world beyond
- c. religion must find from Source, concepts relevant to age to contribute to well-being based on unity and justice.

D. Unemployment demonstrates this.

- 1. Work is seen solely as means for consumption of goods
 - a. Circular: Acquire and consume to maintain and expand production to support employment.
- 2. Inadequate conception seen by:
 - a. apathy among employed
 - b. demoralization of growing unemployed
- 3. world needs new "work ethic" which requires:
 - a. creative interaction of scientific and religious knowledge systems
 - b. recognition that human beings seek to express capacities through productive work for own needs and others
 - c. through this work, participants advance process of civilization in unity with others.
 - i. such work when done in service is, according to Bahá'u'lláh, a form of prayer and worship in which light each individual has the capacity to see themselves.
 - ii. no narrower a perspective will call up the magnitude of effort required for economic tasks ahead.

E. The environmental crisis highlights this.

- 1. Nature clearly cannot sustain any demand made upon it.
 - a. Goals of expansion, acquisition, satisfaction of people's wants are not realistic guides to policy.
 - b. Requires recognition that these challenges are global not particular
- 2. Deification of nature shows spiritual and intellectual desparation of crisis
 - a. Recognition of organic nature of creation and responsibility to care for it can not alone establish a new set of values and trusteeship.
- 3. Only a breakthrough in scientific and spiritual understanding can, requiring :
 - a. a capacity for contentment
 - b. welcoming of moral discipline
 - c. devotion to duty
- 4. The teachings of the Founders of great religions have repeatedly instilled this, but their expression now requires a new form consistent with the needs of the age.
 - a. contentment is not fatalism.
 - b. morality is not life-denying puritanism (despite presumptions in past).
 - c. devotion to duty does not bring self-righteousness but self-worth.

F. Denial to women of full equality challenges science and religion further to economic life.

1. The rational soul has no sex.
2. Survival requirements of the past cannot justify inequities today.
3. Equality in all areas of life is central to reconceiving development strategy.
4. Progress in equality will be a measure of success in any program.
 - a. Given importance of economics in civilization, this requires women to:
 - i. receive equal opportunity
 - ii. participate in discourse for rethinking economic issues.
 - a. impersonal markets with human beings as autonomous makers of self-regarding choices is not adequate.
 - b. we need models through science and religion based on:
 - i. sympathetic understanding of shared experience
 - ii. viewing human beings in relation to others
 - iii. centrality of family and community to well-being

VI. Power and Authority - par 54

A. Transformation of society raises question of:

1. Power to accomplish
2. Authority to exercise that power

B. Power traditionally interpreted as advantage by person or groups

1. culture of division and conflict has incorporated this view regardless of underpinning ideological assertions.
2. has been associated with individuals, factions, peoples, classes, nations, men and acquisition, surpassing, domination, resisting, winning.

C. Has resulted in setbacks for human well-being and extraordinary progress of civilization.

1. Behavioral patterns producing this clearly have limitations.

D. These habits and attitudes have outworn their usefulness.

1. with global problems, can no longer maintain that power means advantage for various segments of the human family.
 - a. mistaken theory
 - b. of no practical significance
 - c. those who maintain this are finding their plans are frustrated and hindered.
 - d. in competitive expression, is as irrelevant as locomotive technology to satellite lifting.

E. It is possible to redefine.

1. humanity has always been able to conceive of power in other forms where creative resources are found within.
2. the power of truth itself has been an agent of change in philosophical, religious, artistic, scientific experience.
3. force of character is another means for mobilizing response

4. influence of example in lives of individuals or societies also is powerful mobilizer.

5. unimagined power of unity - Bahá'u'lláh's quote

F. Institutions will tap this based on principles in harmony with evolving interests of maturing race.

1. obligation to win confidence, respect, genuine support from those whose actions they seek to govern.

2. consult openly and to fullest extent possible with those affected

3. assess objectively the real needs & aspirations of communities being served

4. benefit from scientific and moral advancement to make use of resources

a. this includes energies of members

5. most importantly, build & maintain unity among members and institutions (through justice in all matters)

G. Requires culture with democratic spirit and method

1. not same as partisanship, despite accomplishments of past.

a. has given rise to cynicism, apathy, corruption

2. political theatre of nominations, candidature, electioneering, and solicitation is not necessary to society nor does it well serve society.

a. as people are progressively educated and believe that real interests are being served by program proposals, they will all be capable of adopting procedures that refine the decision-making process.

H. Governance must be seen by national and local leaders in global perspective with responsibility to all humankind.

VII. (All institutions of society must be reshaped fundamentally; this is possible.) - par 61

A. Protagonists are everyone

1. generality of humankind

2. members of governing institutions at all levels

3. persons serving in agencies of international coordination

4. scientists and social thinkers

5. those with artistic talents or access to media

6. leaders of non-governmental organizations

B. Requires belief that however long and whatever setbacks, governance can be conducted to serve humanity's real needs.

1. This prospect depends on conviction that social evolution has reached a turning point.

2. Bahá'u'lláh has brought such assurance.

3. Despite turmoil of the times, greatest mistake leaders could make is to cast doubt on the ultimate outcome.

a. a world is passing away and a new one is struggling to be born

C. Tests to habits, attitudes, and institutions are as necessary as

inescapable.

D. We must rise with faith and resolve to match the energies with which this spiritual springtime is endowed

— Prosperity of Humankind Study Outline (Used by permission of the curator)