

Big History  
Introduction  
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1. The Guardian feels that a sound knowledge of history, including religious history, and also of social and economic subjects, is of great help in teaching the Cause to intelligent people....  
Letter Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *A Compilation on Scholarship*, p. 28
2. ....among existing historical records differences are to be found, and each of the various peoples of the world hath its own account of the age of the earth and of its history. Some trace their history as far back as eight thousand years, others as far as twelve thousand years. To any one that hath read the book of Jūk it is clear and evident how much the accounts given by the various books have differed.  
Please God thou wilt turn thine eyes towards the Most Great Revelation, and entirely disregard these conflicting tales and traditions.  
Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, pp. 174-175
3. If we review history, we will observe that human advancement has been greatest in the development of material virtues. Civilization is the sign and evidence of this progression. Throughout the world, material civilization has attained truly wonderful heights and degrees of efficiency—that is to say, the outward powers and virtues of man have greatly developed, but the inner and ideal virtues have been correspondingly delayed and neglected. It is now the time in the history of the world for us to strive and give an impetus to the advancement and development of inner forces—that is to say, we must arise to service in the world of morality, for human morals are in need of readjustment. We must also render service to the world of intellectuality in order that the minds of men may increase in power and become keener in perception, assisting the intellect of man to attain its supremacy so that the ideal virtues may appear. Before a step is taken in this direction we must be able to prove Divinity from the standpoint of reason so that no doubt or objection may remain for the rationalist. Afterward, we must be able to prove the existence of the bounty of God—that the divine bounty encompasses humanity and that it is transcendental. Furthermore, we must demonstrate that the spirit of man is immortal, that it is not subject to disintegration and that it comprises the virtues of humanity.  
Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 325-326
4. History is a powerful instrument. At its best, it provides a perspective on the past and casts a light on the future. It populates human consciousness with heroes, saints and martyrs whose example awakens in everyone touched by it capacities they had not imagined they possessed. It helps make sense of the world—and of human experience. It inspires, consoles and enlightens. It enriches life. In the great body of literature and legend that it has left to humanity, history's hand can be seen at work shaping much of the course of civilization—in the legends that have inspired the ideals of every people since the dawn of recorded time, as well as in the epics of the Ramayana, in the exploits celebrated in the Odyssey and the Aeneid, in the Nordic sagas, in the Shahnameh, and in much of the Bible and the Qur'án.  
Universal House of Justice, *Century of Light*, p. 69

5. The great question appertaining to humanity is religion. The first condition is that man must intelligently investigate its foundations. The second condition is that he must admit and acknowledge the oneness of the world of humanity. By this means the attainment of true fellowship among mankind is assured, and the alienation of races and individuals is prevented. All must be considered the servants of God; all must recognize God as the one kind Protector and Creator. In proportion to the acknowledgment of the oneness and solidarity of mankind, fellowship is possible, misunderstandings will be removed and reality become apparent. Then will the light of reality shine forth, and when reality illumines the world, the happiness of humankind will become a verity. Man must spiritually perceive that religion has been intended by God to be the means of grace, the source of life and cause of agreement. If it becomes the cause of discord, enmity and hatred, it is better that man should be without it. For in its teachings we seek the spirit of charity and love to bind the hearts of men together. If, on the contrary, we find it alienates and embitters human hearts, we are justified in casting it aside....

Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 327-328

6. Consider history. What has brought unity to nations, morality to peoples and benefits to mankind? If we reflect upon it we will find that establishing the divine religions has been the greatest means toward accomplishing the oneness of humanity. The foundation of divine reality in religion has done this; not imitations of ancestral religious forms. Imitations are opposed to each other and have ever been the cause of strife, enmity, jealousy and war. The divine religions are collective centers in which diverse standpoints may meet, agree and unify. They accomplish oneness of nativities, races and policies.... Abdu'l-Baha, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 101; *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 158

7. History has thus far recorded principally the experience of tribes, cultures, classes, and nations. With the physical unification of the planet in this century and acknowledgement of the interdependence of all who live on it, the history of humanity as one people is now beginning. The long, slow civilizing of human character has been a sporadic development, uneven and admittedly inequitable in the material advantages it has conferred. Nevertheless, endowed with the wealth of all the genetic and cultural diversity that has evolved through past ages, the earth's inhabitants are now challenged to draw on their collective inheritance to take up, consciously and systematically, the responsibility for the design of their future.

It is unrealistic to imagine that the vision of the next stage in the advancement of civilization can be formulated without a searching reexamination of the attitudes and assumptions that currently underlie approaches to social and economic development. At the most obvious level, such rethinking will have to address practical matters of policy, resource utilization, planning procedures, implementation methodologies, and organization. As it proceeds, however, fundamental issues will quickly emerge, related to the long-term goals to be pursued, the social structures required, the implications for development of principles of social justice, and the nature and role of knowledge in effecting enduring change. Indeed, such a reexamination will be driven to seek a broad consensus of understanding about human nature itself.

Baha'i International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, p. 16

8. We have but to turn our gaze to humanity's blood-stained history to realize that nothing short of intense mental as well as physical agony has been able to precipitate those epoch-making changes that constitute the greatest landmarks in the history of human civilization.

Shoghi Effendi, *The Federation of Mankind*, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p., 206