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"The Survivability of Intelligent Life on Earth: Some Basic Contrasting Approaches"

The Survivability of Intelligent Life on Earth: Some Basic Contrasting Approaches

Graham Nicholson[1]

If you survey the contemporary global scene and its human society, there are a number of major issues in process that raise questions about the survivability of that human in society as an intelligent social species into the longer term future. It is possible to debate the nature of those questions and the degree of threats they pose to humanity, but these are matters requiring some considerable expertise. It is not necessary in this article to discuss the threats in any detail. Sufficient to note the concerns that are sometimes now expressed about such matters of observable concern, for example, as the existence of various violent, terrible conflicts in the world, the breakdowns in global order and the many deep divisions and prejudices amongst humanity, the potential for the use of weapons of mass destruction[2] and the increased reliance on and build up of offensive weapons, concerns about gross human rights abuses and genocide, concerns about global environmental degradation and climate change[3] and concerns about artificial intelligence and the manipulation and abuse of electronic mediums. There may well be other such concerns. The relevant point here is that concerns are sometimes being seriously expressed about whether they point to questions about the long term survivability of the human species as intelligent beings in the light of contemporary directions. Some prominent commentators who have even considered such a topic may, for obvious reasons, be reluctant to predict the non survivability of humanity, at least without making suggestions as to how this could be corrected or averted. But a potential existential threat is sometimes expressed by some prominent in various fields. That threat may be actively being examined in some quarters. Sometimes the view is expressed as a question as to the survivability of all life on earth

[1] Graham Nicholson, Phd, retired lawyer, Baha'i.
[2] Albert Einstein is famously credited with saying, *"I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones*." This may have been a paraphrase of Einstein's well known views on the subject.
[3] The dangers from climate change are believed by some to constitute a threat to the survivability of the human race in that climactic conditions could become such as to create non livable conditions. It has even been suggested that the ongoing mass extinction of other living things is itself a threat to the persistence of civilization because it is now irreversible.

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including humanity[4]. These views deserve consideration. A selection of relevant quotes follows:

"I don't think the human race will survive the next thousand years, unless we spread into space."[5]

(Stephen Hawking)

"We are in danger of destroying ourselves by our greed and stupidity. We cannot remain looking inwards at ourselves on a small and increasingly polluted and overcrowded planet."

(Stephen Hawking)[6]

"Humanity may not survive 50 years as nuclear weapons and global risks push our existence into crisis."

(David Gross)[7]

"More and more, as civilization develops, we find the primitive to be essential to us. We root into the primitive as a tree roots into the earth. If we cut off the roots, we lose the sap without which we can't progress or even survive. I don't believe our civilization can continue very long out of contact with the primitive."
(Charles Lindbergh)[8]

"AI is certainly powerful enough to drive events that cause a billion deaths,' Gates told Meet the Press moderator Kirsten Welker, before adding, *'So even though it's pretty hard to get to 100 per cent* [of humanity], *there's never been a weapon as powerful as the combination of people with ill intent using the latest AI tools."*

[4] *"The fact is that no species has ever had such wholesale control over everything on Earth, living or dead, as we now have. That lays upon us, whether we like it or not, an awesome responsibility. In our hands now lies not only our own future, but that of all other living creatures with whom we share the Earth."*- (from David Attenborough's documentary series, *Life On Earth)*.
[5] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/1602361.stm> The suggestion that humanity may only survive by moving to somewhere else in space has been criticised as not being practical – see Bill Mckribben , "*Life on a Shrinking Planet*", in The Fragile Earth, D Remnick and H Finder (Eds), The Fragile Earth, William Collins (2021) at 330.
[6] First stated in an interview with Larry King in 2010.
[7] The Economic Times, English Edition, 20 April 2026. David Goss is an American theoretical physicist and string theorist. He shared the 2004 Nobel Prize in Physics.
[8] From Brainy Quote.

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(Bill Gates)[9]

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

(Martin Luther King Jr)[10]

As stated, the concerns may extend to the survival of all life on earth and not just that of humans.

"We humans, alone on Earth, are powerful enough to create worlds, and then destroy them."

(David Attenborough)[11]

The negative views as to the survivability of humans are reinforced somewhat by reference to the history of many other species on earth that have become extinct in the past or are threatened with extinction. It seems that there is a cyclical pattern in such cases as many species evolve, grow and then become extinct through some cause. Of this pattern, Carl Sagan is reported to have stated:

"Extinction is the rule. Survival is the exception."[12]

In this context, this article is not so much concerned with predictions of doom and gloom by Divine fiat; that is, it is not a matter of entering upon various doomsday prophesies, Armageddon and the like[13]. Some religionists may rely on passages of the Bible to support the view that such an apocalypse will occur

[9] Stated by Gates in NBC's Meet the Press. Prof Geoffrey Hinton, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics for his work in AI, also said there was a "10% to 20%" risk of leading to human extinction within the next three decades - <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/dec/27/godfather-of-ai-raises-odds-of-the-technology-wiping-out-humanity-over-next-30-years>

[10] Dr. King shared this powerful message during multiple addresses in the 1960s,

[11] A Life on Our Planet: My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future, (Witness Books, 2020). In it, Attenborough states that the present use of the planet by humanity is not sustainable and will lead to catastrophe unless this is reversed. He calls for a reversal of the present transition (at 125).

[12]The Varieties of Scientific Experience: A Personal View of the Search for God (2006). Carl Sagan also argued that nuclear war would be a catastrophe.

It is possible that if there has been intelligent life elsewhere in the universe in the past that it also could have become extinct by some later cause. It can be argued that the possibility of extinction could therefore also exists for human beings in the future in the right circumstances.

[13] The discussion of some form of Divinely caused apocalypse and matters of eschatology are matters for other commentators, not this article. There is a vast literature, mainly from some religious sources, suggesting that humanity collectively faces a doomsday conclusion of some kind, with only the elect surviving. The writer tends to take a much more optimistic view of future human survivability in some form whilst recognising that there are real threats to human wellbeing and survival. The writer disclaims any unique knowledge of his own in such matters and relies primarily on his Baha'i beliefs.

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in which the lives of all humanity suddenly come to an end on earth. Arguably this is only one interpretation. Other views foresee a new heaven on earth arising[14], indicating that even though there may be more very hard times, some human life will still survive. On one view, the reference in scriptures to "end times" or to "last days"[15] is not a reference to the end of the whole human race on earth, but rather to the end of the existing defective and divided global human order, perhaps accompanied by the return of the Promise One, with the old global order to be replaced by a new and much more spiritual order thereafter. Some religionists might describe this as leading to the Kingdom of God on earth[16]. The spread of such ultimate apocalyptic stories that take the view as depicting all life on earth being destroyed can, on one view, be regarded as a form of escapism and can impede the invention and adoption of various remedial steps for survivability, spiritual and otherwise, of which humans are very capable if properly guided[17]. This article does not so much direct attention to the possibility of the ultimate and permanent destruction of all life on earth by Divine intervention in some catastrophic single event[18]. Rather the attention is directed at the possibility that intelligent human life in society could, as a result of developing serious conditions that may not be adequately addressed, be adversely and seriously affected in the future in various ways in the light of various contemporary global issues of concern. We cannot at this stage forecast as to exactly if and when that might occur, how it may occur or how serious it might be. It may even possibly be destructive of much of human society, although not causing the extinction of all human life. In this regard, it is a matter of questioning or recognizing that rational informed concerns have been expressed about potential human survivability as intelligent civilized beings, thereby affecting humanity's capacity in constructing and maintaining a peaceful, ordered, progressive and just global society. These are matters that

[14] See for example the Lord's prayer – "*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven*…."
[15] For example, Isaiah 2:2.
[16] See discussion below. For a discussion of this subject see Stephen Lambden, "*Catastrophe, Armageddon and Millennium: Some aspects of the Bahai-Baha'i exegesis of apocalyptic symbolism*", Baha'i Studies Review.
[17] Kathryn Achulz, "*Writers in the Storm*" in The Fragile Earth, D Remnick and H Finder (Eds), William Collins, (2021) at124.
[18] This is not to say that there will be no catastrophic events in the future in which many humans may be killed or injured. The present trend of world events indicate that this is already occurring in many places.

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require wider consideration and, if possible, remediation. In doing so we look at some contrasting approaches to this end.

Arguably one of the most valuable features of the human condition is what can be described as humanity's intellectual abilities, that is, its high level of intelligence. Arguably this may be critical in enabling humanity to take action to avoid the worst effects affecting survivability. This ability has enabled humans to make huge advances over history. Whilst there may be various theories as to exactly what constitutes that intelligence and whether it is purely physical in character or whether it is an aspect of the non physical mind, there is broad agreement as to its huge importance in humans. On one view, this intellectual facility in which humans are so strong is that which distinguishes the human from the animal. Thus it was stated that humans have used this gift to make all kinds of adaption towards human progress, such as new discoveries of reality and of inventions:

"Though man has powers and outer senses in common with the animal, yet an extraordinary power exists in him of which the animal is bereft. The sciences, arts, inventions, trades, and discoveries of realities, are the results of this spiritual power. This is a power which encompasses all things, comprehends their realities, discovers all the hidden mysteries of beings, and through this knowledge controls them: it even perceives things which do not exist outwardly; that is to say, intellectual realities which are not sensible, and which have no outward existence, because they are invisible; so it comprehends the mind, the spirit, the qualities, the characters, the love and sorrow of man, which are intellectual realities. Moreover, these existing sciences, arts, laws, and endless inventions of man at one time were invisible, mysterious, and hidden secrets; it is only the all-encompassing human power which has discovered and brought them out from the plane of the invisible to the plane of the visible. So telegraphy, photography, phonography, and all such inventions and wonderful arts, were at one time hidden mysteries: the human reality discovered and brought them out from the plane of the invisible to the plane of the visible. There was even a time when the qualities of this iron which you see -- indeed of all the metals -- were hidden mysteries; men discovered this metal, and wrought it in this industrial

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form. It is the same with all the other discoveries and inventions of man, which are innumerable."[19]

It is this intellectual facility that has enabled humanity to advance in civilized society over time and contribute to that advancement in many ways. It is an essential element of modern human life and society. The intellect enables the human to observe, analyse, meditate, conceive, plan and implement ideas, principles, laws and concepts in a social context. Collectively it can be exercised in a group through such mechanisms as mutual investigation, experimentation, debate, formulation, consultation, planning and consensus. It is also a capacity which can be influenced by moral/ethical and spiritual considerations and beliefs and matters of conscience. This intellectual facility is one which most humans would strongly wish to preserve in addition to the continued physical functioning of human life and would not wish to see it replaced or terminated. Certainly no sane citizen will favour the loss of this facility in favour of some modern, non-human, electronic decision-making device.

Of course human intelligence alone, whilst being an incredibly powerful force, may not be sufficient for humanity to successfully navigate all the perils facing its survivability. Humans are obviously not infallible and often make errors and follow the wrong paths from time to time even after the application of intelligent thought. The very weapons of mass destruction that could destroy life are products of human intelligence. There are other qualities that could also be listed as being necessities in this context. Rationality and common sense might be suggested[20], qualities that indicate that human are capable of facing up to threats to their survivability and doing something about it in reasonable, common sense ways. Again, these qualities again may not be sufficient by themselves in the face of such serious concerns. And of course views will often differ as to what may be considered rational and common sense in any given situation.

There is another critical element in this context that would seem to be relevant to survivability, that being of the application of good human virtues or ethics. Clearly these are of relevance in enabling humanity in society to exercise the

[19] Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, 303. That is not to say that animals may have their own abilities, some even superior to humans in some respects.
[20] These may be an aspect of human intelligence.

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right conduct and develop the right attitudes that could assist that society to survive and prosper. The Dalai Lama for example points to them as being a critical element of survivability:

"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive."[21]

There may be other human virtues, what some may call Divine virtues, that should be included in this context. As the serious issues facing all humanity develop and become of more concern in this new century, it seems likely that issues of ethics or morality, that which may be described as human values and principles, including those related to global issues of justice and equity, will increasingly become relevant and unavoidable. But in so far as those virtues rely upon accepted statements of general secular principles, there is an open question as to the extent to which they, no matter how widely disseminated and recognised, can provide any guarantees of human survivability given the frailty of the human condition. And there may be a deficiency in the adequacy of modern education in teaching and promoting such values.

Attempts have of course been made to adopt universal statements of values in the form of fundamental human rights. In this regard it is often stated that all humans have certain human rights, including a right to life. This right is proclaimed to be a fundamental human right that protects every person from the unlawful or arbitrary taking of life by governments or public officials. It extends to an obligation to protect from threats to life and to public safety. It is based on international agreements like the preamble to the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[22] and in a variety of human rights instruments, some in legislation, in various countries. It carries a positive duty on governments to reasonably protect that life and safety of every person. There is no recognized general human right just to live in society, but there are a number of more specific rights that protect specific aspects of societal life[23]. Of course

[21] Dalai Lama XIV, The Art of Happiness.
[22] Article 6.
[23] This includes a right to live in peace. *"the duty of States to respect the fundamental human right to life also covers their duty to preserve the right of peoples to live in peace since mass violence and killings caused by war may be considered as an arbitrary loss of life."* (Oxford Public International law, <https://opil.ouplaw.com/display/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e858?>

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it is the case that these fundamental rights, including the right to life, are not presently and fully observed by all governments. Clearly the legislative expression of such rights, although important, is not a sufficient protection by itself to ensure the survivability of humanity[24]. And in any event it is more than just a matter of protecting fundamental human rights given the variety of other threats to that survivability.

There is a question whether it is even necessary to take any specific positive action whatsoever to ensure survivability beyond that which has already been taken, on the basis of the argument and opinion that human beings are rationale, resilient and inventive, capable of avoiding any real threat to their survivability. But tell that to the many poor or insecure people and their families who are anxiously struggling even to meet the most basic needs of life. And tell that to some people who feel totally overwhelmed by all the bad news stories and choose to turn to radical right wing discriminatory politics and politicians in their demands for a solution. There are some commentators that may take the view that nothing additional needs to be done and are still positive about the longer term human future even in the present global scenario[25]. But it is increasingly difficult now to be so positive in the light of contemporary trends. An exception to this may apply in the case of some people activated by certain strong religious beliefs who may rely on their faith and thereby being "saved". Such views have in the past been supported by various religious promises and prophesies[26]. Hope may also be engendered in some people by the fact that all the great religions have teachings which suggest that humanity will eventually

[24] The author of this article has elsewhere expressed a view on the effectiveness of human rights guarantees in *"Remedying The Retreat in the Protection of Citizens' International Human Rights",* 9(3) International Journal of Peace and Development Studies, p 31, July 2018.

[25] For example, Albert Schweitzer stated:
"*Because I have confidence in the powers of truth, and of the spirit, I have confidence in the future of mankind".*
The World Commission on Environment and Development, in its Report 'Our Common Future' (OUP, 1987) expressed the belief that people can build a future that is more prosperous, more just and more secure, but issued a call for cooperative global action to this end.

[26] For example, the Old Testament in the Book of Genesis refers to the sign of the rainbow as a Divine promise not to again destroy all flesh on earth.
Again in the Book of Micah, also the Book of Isaiah, it is stated quite clearly that in the future, wars on earth shall end and peace and disarmament shall occur.
At the same time, the New Testament refers to a great tribulation before the elect are saved and the return of the Divine Manifestation occurs – Gospel of St Matthew, Chapter 24.
The Founder/Prophet of the Baha'i Faith, Baha'u'llah, clearly contemplates that those members of humanity who survive any coming tests will eventually go on to produce a united, just and spiritual civilization on earth as part of a new global order.

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enter into what might be described as a golden, peaceful spiritual age on earth[27], and that in any event there is spiritual life after physical death. But surely it is reasonable that people should still be concerned about their own human survival and future and that of their family, friends and fellow human beings in this life and that they should seek rational and effective solutions.

While it may be more difficult to find similar optimistic expressions of the future wellbeing of humanity outside of religion, there have been occasions in human history when there was a rise in human expectations and hope. It seems that there was more optimism about the human future, for example, following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Berlin Wall, when there was a rise in international cooperation, a decline in hostilities and in the holding of various international conferences and the like. More recent events since then have indicated a regression in this respect, including somewhat of a breakdown in global law and order and a decline in multilateral cooperation with the erection of various national barriers and the spread of narcissistic national politics. It is suggested that this has led to an increase in pessimism and loss of confidence in a positive human future in many parts of the world[28]. The commercial media, with its common emphasis on negative world events and trends, has not always helped in this regard. Those who may still be of an optimistic perspective in this regard may still consider that constructive, peaceful and comprehensive global redirection and change also needs to be

[27] These are not documented in this article.

[28] Writing of this recent change in global circumstances, the Universal House of Justice refers to some less commonly noted circumstances that may have contributed to a more recent decline in attitudes, in that it stated:
"*As the present century opened, new challenges began to loom. With time, these intensified, leading to a retreat from the promising steps forward with which the previous century had closed. Today, many of the dominant currents in societies everywhere are pushing people apart, not drawing them together. Even as global poverty of the most extreme form has decreased, political and economic systems have enabled the enrichment of small coteries with grossly exorbitant wealth – a condition that fuels fundamental instability in world affairs. The interactions of the individual citizen, governing institutions, and society as a whole are often fraught, as those arguing for the primacy of one or the other show more and more intransigence in their thinking. Religious fundamentalism is warping the character of communities, even nations. The failings of so many organizations and institutions of society have understandably led to a decline in public trust, but this has been systematically exploited by vested interests seeking to undermine the credibility of all sources of knowledge. Certain shared ethical principles, which seemed to be in ascendant at the start of the century, are eroded, threatening the prevailing consensus about right and wrong that, in various arenas, have succeeded in holding humanity's basest tendencies in check. And the will to engage in collective action, which twenty years ago represented a powerful strain of thinking among world leaders, has been cowed, assailed by resurgent forces of racism, nationalism and factionalism*." – Statement of the Universal House of Justice, 18 January 2019, on the centenary of the Paris Peace Conference.

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taken to facilitate a worthwhile form of human survival, or at least to mitigate the effects of the various serious concerns threatening that survival[29].

So where does humanity now need to turn, and what action it is reasonable for humanity to take, in order to ensure its worthwhile survival on earth as intelligent civilized beings into the longer term? This is a critical question once it is accepted that there are realistic threats to human survivability. If a person agrees that there are such serious threats, and if that person in concerned about the future of humanity and its wellbeing, then it is natural that that person may support appropriate action in mitigation if he or she is able.

One option is for a concerned citizen to become a civil activist seeking change by publicly voicing one's opinions, distributing critical literature, engaging in protests, mounting campaigns, perhaps even engaging in civil disobedience. This has become a not uncommon method of pursing certain ends by various people in various parts of the world where it is even possible. It was a methodology, for example, that was employed earlier during the Cold War in anti nuclear campaigns. A more contemporary example lies in a variety of environmental protests and other activities that are being taken in many places[30]. But essentially the activist role is often a divisive measure, critical of current trends and policies, with no guarantees of success. It can lead to confrontation, civil strife and even violence. A more peaceful, constructive role as an activist can of course lead to positive results, but it may be questionable whether these can go far enough to effectively deal with all the serious complex issues of survivability.

Another alternative is to use political means to promote a particular view, perhaps even by operating within one or other of the existing political parties in any country or by forming another party or group where this is possible. One example of the latter lies in the formation of "green" parties. But again this is a divisive measure, given that the party system is built upon competition between parties, contention and sometimes confrontation. And given the very divided

[29] Thus Ervin Lazlo stated:
"A new civilization is not likely to come about in time if we sit with folded hands, waiting for the converging holism of the new cultures and the new sciences to lay the groundwork for it. A critical mass of people in society must take an active role. That means you and me, and others around us. There are decisive things you and I can do to promote the shift toward a peaceful and sustainable civilization."

[30] The examples are too numerous to mention.

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nature of the present global order, within a weak international legal system, with much more weight being given to the particular perceived interests of individual nations under their own national political systems over the wider interests of all humanity, it is questionable as to whether a party political approach is going to achieve effective and united global results. The end result of such an approach can depend on a matter of political numbers and relative power in each country rather than on the intrinsic value of the ideas and principles being advanced where directed at the wellbeing of all humanity.

Arguably it follows from the last paragraph that we need to look for more effective global approaches and solutions to deal with what in the modern interdependent world are essentially global concerns. The twentieth century was marked by a greatly increased effort by many countries, despite terrible wars, to develop a new international regime based on multilateral treaties and agreements between nations. This was accompanied by the erection of many new regional and global institutions seeking to find global solutions. At the same time, individual countries strenuously sought to preserve their absolute national sovereignty and their right not to be bound by any such arrangements without their consent[31]. The epitome of such more global developments was perhaps reached at the end of the Cold War and the holding thereafter of many global conferences and the like around the turn of the century, generating some expectations that perhaps significant global change might be on the way. But as has already been noted, there has been somewhat of a regression since then in the relations between countries and in the multilateral system generally. It seems that there is an attachment of many people to the primacy of perceived national wellbeing and prosperity, rooted in the belief that the interests of the nation can best be served by such a primacy, and resulting in the sidelining of the interests of the whole planet and of all humanity. Given the seriousness of the global concerns as to survivability, this seems somewhat of a blunt rebuff. It is fair to say that the result is that the present global system is now very divided and is not working that well[32]. It is that which is mainly giving rise to issues of survivability.

The latter issue is in part the result of the continued application of the inherited doctrine of absolute national sovereignty, resulting in the very divided global

[31] This included their right to develop and acquire their own arms and to wage wars.
[32] As indicated by the threats already mentioned. Arguably sometimes human affairs need to deteriorate, even to a very low level, before they can begin to rise up and improve again.

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system that humanity still has. This is one primary factor that is preventing the emergence of a new, much more united global system, one that can more effectively address on a global basis the many issues of concern that are giving rise to issues of survivability. The question posed is as to where to look for a solution that would directly address this issue of sovereignty such as to be even capable of creating sufficient momentum for global change to happen. Given the strength of this inherited attachment, it is clearly a huge ask, one that is arguably beyond human effort alone and therefore one which requires profound spiritual guidance and assistance. If politics and other secular initiatives are not so capable, then arguably only religion directed towards unity has that potential under the guidance of a benign, caring Deity. A longer term view of the evolutionary developments in human history, indicating an overall pattern that displays a gradual progression and a higher spiritual direction towards greater human unity, would seem to be helpful in this regard[33]. Thus the Baha'i sacred writings directly address this issue and make the call:

"*Unification of the whole of mankind is the hall-mark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life."*[34]

Those sacred writings, in commenting on the role that humanity must play in bringing global change, indicate a Divine determination that that progression must lead to a universal curtailment of absolute national sovereignty and other major changes, to the degree necessary to allow a new, peaceful, united and just global order to emerge. This is seen as the spiritual destiny of humanity. Thus for example, the writings indicate that the changes must be based on future global unity in diversity under the spiritual concept of the consciousness of the oneness of all humanity. The task ahead is monumental and complex, and may

[33] But this movement towards global unity should not be mistaken for a movement ending in some kind of a utopia – any human society will always have its own trials and challenges given that humans are fallible by nature and that human development towards perfection is endless.
[34] Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Baha'u'llah, p. 202.

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well as a result of opposition result in much trouble and suffering[35]. Failure to so work towards global unity in accordance with this guidance is seen as being fatal. Whatever the price, it seems that the path to global unity, to put the unity of the whole planet and all humanity first, is ultimately a necessary precondition towards ensuring the worthwhile survivability of human society. There is on this view no other choice[36], and is best embraced collectively and cooperatively in the right spirit and with right determination and the right leadership. These writings, at least in relation to America, state:

"The American nation, ... stands, indeed, from whichever angle one observes its immediate fortunes, in grave peril. The woes and tribulations which threaten it are partly avoidable, but mostly inevitable and God-sent, for by reason of them 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, will find itself purged of its anachronistic conceptions, and prepared to play a preponderating role, as foretold by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the hoisting of the standard of the Lesser Peace, in the unification of mankind, and in the establishment of a world federal government on this planet. These same fiery tribulations will not only firmly weld the American nation to its sister nations in both hemispheres, but will through their cleansing effect, purge it thoroughly of the accumulated dross which ingrained racial prejudice, rampant materialism, widespread ungodliness and moral laxity have combined, in the course of successive generations, to produce, and which have prevented her thus far from assuming the role of world spiritual leadership forecast by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's unerring pen -- a role which she is bound to fulfill through travail and sorrow."[37]

The words of the Founder Prophet of the Baha'i Faith, Baha'u'llah[38], record His emphatic statement in the direction of global unity:

[35] Although not necessarily so if the right choices are made. The alternative of a cooperative global approach among all nations remains a possibility.
[36] As Horace Holley stated "*Unity is the condition of human survival*." (Baha'i World, Volume 10 at 649), and that "*cooperation and unity [are] imperative to the very existence of mankind* " (Baha'i World, Volume 4 at 351).
[37] Shoghi Effendi, Citadel of Faith, p. 126.
[38] 1817-1892.

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"O ye children of men', He writes, *'the fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race...'* And He warns, *'The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established*."[39]

It is for others to judge whether this prescription, spiritually based, offers the solution to human survivability in the years ahead.

[39] Baha'u'llah, The Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, p. ix.