

E PLURIBUS UNUM: OUT OF MANY, ONE

In this wondrous Revelation, this glorious century, the foundation of the Faith of God and the distinguishing feature of His Law is the consciousness of the Oneness of Mankind. ~'Abdu'l-Bahá

1. The incomparable Friend saith: The path to freedom hath been outstretched; hasten ye thereunto. The wellspring of wisdom is overflowing; quaff ye therefrom. Say: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Verily I say, whatsoever leadeth to the decline of ignorance and the increase of knowledge hath been, and will ever remain, approved in the sight of the Lord of creation. Say: O people! Walk ye neath the shadow of justice and truthfulness and seek ye shelter within the tabernacle of unity.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Tabernacle of Unity, Tablet 1

2. The most glorious fruit of the tree of knowledge is this exalted word: Of one tree are all ye the fruit, and of one bough the leaves. Let not man glory in this that he loveth his country, let him rather glory in this that he loveth his kind. Concerning this We have previously revealed that which is the means of the reconstruction of the world and the unity of nations. Blessed are they that attain thereunto. Blessed are they that act accordingly.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 127

3. O CHILDREN OF MEN!

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words, Arabic: Number 68

4. The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Daystar of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The One true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 14

5. Consort with all men, O people of Bahá, in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship. If ye be aware of a certain truth, if ye possess a jewel, of which others are deprived, share it with them in a language of utmost kindness and goodwill. If it be accepted, if it fulfill its purpose, your object is attained. If anyone should refuse it, leave him unto himself, and beseech God to guide him. Beware lest ye deal unkindly with him. A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the spirit, it clotheth the words with meaning, it is the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 6

6. We have created you from one tree and have caused you to be as the leaves and fruit of the same tree, that haply ye may become a source of comfort to one another. Regard ye not others save as ye regard your own selves, that no feeling of aversion may prevail amongst you so as to shut you out from Him Whom God shall make manifest on the Day of Resurrection. It behooveth you all to be one indivisible people; thus should ye return unto Him Whom God shall make manifest.

Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 129

7. It behooveth man to adhere tenaciously unto that which will promote fellowship, kindness and unity.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 89

8. The unity which is productive of unlimited results is first a unity of mankind which recognizes that all are sheltered beneath the overshadowing glory of the All-Glorious, that all are servants of one God; for all breathe the same atmosphere, live upon the same earth, move beneath the same heavens, receive effulgence from the same sun and are under the protection of one God. This is the most great unity, and its results are lasting if humanity adheres to it; but mankind has hitherto violated it, adhering to sectarian or other limited unities such as racial, patriotic or unity of self-interests; therefore, no great results have been forthcoming.

9. Nevertheless, it is certain that the radiance and favors of God are encompassing, minds have developed, perceptions have become acute, sciences and arts are widespread, and capacity exists for the proclamation and promulgation of the real and ultimate unity of mankind, which will bring forth marvelous results. It will reconcile all religions, make warring nations loving, cause hostile kings to become friendly and bring peace and happiness to the human world. It will cement together the Orient and Occident, remove forever the foundations of war and upraise the ensign of the Most Great Peace. These limited unities are, therefore, signs of that great unity which will make all the human family one by being productive of the attractions of conscience in mankind.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Univ. Peace*, p. 257

10. THE Creator of all is One God.

From this same God all creation sprang into existence, and He is the one goal, towards which everything in nature yearns. This conception was embodied in the words of Christ, when He said, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” Man is the sum of Creation, and the Perfect Man is the expression of the complete thought of the Creator—the Word of God.

Consider the world of created beings, how varied and diverse they are in species, yet with one sole origin. All the differences that appear are those of outward form and color. This diversity of type is apparent throughout the whole of nature.

Behold a beautiful garden full of flowers, shrubs, and trees. Each flower has a different charm, a peculiar beauty, its own delicious perfume and beautiful color. The trees too, how varied are they in size, in growth, in foliage—and what different fruits they bear! Yet all these flowers, shrubs and trees spring from the self-same earth, the same sun shines upon them and the same clouds give them rain.

11. So it is with humanity. It is made up of many races, and its peoples are of different color...—but they all come from the same God, and all are servants to Him. This diversity among the children of men has unhappily not the same effect as it has among the vegetable creation, where the spirit shown is more harmonious. Among men exists the diversity of animosity, and it is this that causes war and hatred among the different nations of the world.

... Let us look rather at the beauty in diversity, the beauty of harmony, and learn a lesson from the vegetable creation. If you beheld a garden in which all the plants were the same as to form, color and perfume, it would not seem beautiful to you at all, but, rather, monotonous and dull. The garden which is pleasing to the eye and which makes the heart glad, is the garden in which are growing side by side flowers of every hue, form and perfume, and the joyous contrast of color is what makes for charm and beauty. ...

12. Do not allow difference of opinion, or diversity of thought to separate you from your fellowmen, or to be the cause of dispute, hatred and strife in your hearts.

Rather, search diligently for the truth and make all men your friends.

Every edifice is made of many different stones, yet each depends on the other to such an extent that if one were displaced the whole building would suffer; if one is faulty the structure is imperfect.

13. Bah’u’lláh has drawn the circle of unity, He has made a design for the uniting of all the peoples,

and for the gathering of them all under the shelter of the tent of universal unity. This is the work of the Divine Bounty, and we must all strive with heart and soul until we have the reality of unity in our midst, and as we work, so will strength be given unto us. Leave all thought of self, and strive only to be obedient and submissive to the Will of God. In this way only shall we become citizens of the Kingdom of God, and attain unto life everlasting.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 55

14. The principle of the Oneness of Mankind—the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh revolve—is no mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of vague and pious hope. Its appeal is not to be merely identified with a reawakening of the spirit of brotherhood and good-will among men, nor does it aim solely at the fostering of harmonious cooperation among individual peoples and nations. Its implications are deeper, its claims greater than any which the Prophets of old were allowed to advance. Its message is applicable not only to the individual, but concerns itself primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all the states and nations as members of one human family. ...It implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced.

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 42

15. ... though world unity is possible—nay, inevitable—it ultimately cannot be achieved without unreserved acceptance of the oneness of humankind... ..the reality that humanity is one people must be the starting point for a new order. The vast array of relations among nations—and within them—all need to be re-envisaged in this light.

...Humanity is gripped by a crisis of identity, as various peoples and groups struggle to define themselves, their place in the world, and how they should act. Without a vision of shared identity and common purpose, they fall into competing ideologies and power struggles. Seemingly countless permutations of “us” and “them” define group identities ever more narrowly and in contrast to one another. Consider how radically different

such a fragmented conception of human identity is from the one that follows from a recognition of the oneness of humanity. In this perspective, the diversity that characterizes the human family, far from contradicting its oneness, endows it with richness. Unity, in its Bahá’í expression, contains the essential concept of diversity, distinguishing it from uniformity. It is through love for all people, and by subordinating lesser loyalties to the best interests of humankind, that the unity of the world can be realized and the infinite expressions of human diversity find their highest fulfilment.

The Universal House of Justice, 18 January 2019

16. O God! Dispel all those elements which are the cause of discord, and prepare for us all those things which are the cause of unity and accord!

O God! Descend upon us Heavenly Fragrance and change this gathering into a gathering of Heaven! Grant to us every benefit and every food. Prepare for us the Food of Love! Give us the Food of Knowledge! Bestow on us the Food of Heavenly Illumination!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Prayers*

Personal Prayers

Reflection on the Texts

Discussion

Meaningful change can advance in unassuming settings at the grassroots. Where people are explicitly putting into practice the principle of the oneness of humanity, we have seen that contributors from different religious, racial, ethnic, political, cultural, and economic backgrounds can pursue shared goals. Under such conditions, they consult to bridge differences, reconcile perspectives, and make collective decisions. They are able to take action and learn their way forward. They do not have all the answers, but they are working on questions that are crucial to our common endeavor, such as...

- How do we build genuine bonds of concern, mutual responsibility, and collaboration that allow people to transcend whatever differences arise as they work together?

*A Common Endeavor
The Bahá’is of the United States*