

Where does racism start?

With a comment, a fear, a stare, justification built on a belief, compounded by rumor. It begins with me and each of us. I'm different because of my color or my race or my ethnicity. It's a cultural thing, THEY do things differently, THEY don't have the same values, I'm just not comfortable around THEM, you just can't trust THEM, you don't know what THEY will do!

It's a faulty view through a fault finding eye. And at this time in human history even color blindness is not enough!

Prejudice is only eradicated through experience. "Consort ye all with all men, all religions, all races, all nationalities, all creeds, all classes in utmost harmony." How can we help each other to take advantage of the opportunity to build a racially diverse community? What will you commit to do today?

I know that if we did our God given duty in reference to the race situation in this country, we would have quite a different world and a much richer and diverse Bahá'í community. We are on the right track but need to build up steam. God isn't going to wait for us to catch on. His plan is moving and if we as individuals want to play a part, we have to run and race to be in the forefront. When we think of our forefathers at the constitutional convention declaring independence, these men were taking a personal risk. I know my grandchildren and their grandchildren will study these very days and look upon those precious souls who act today to build the unity of the human race.

I wonder where are those leaders of men today. Those moral beings to take us to the next plateau in human history. I believe that they are in this very room!

Spiritual attributes exist in every one, like electricity, it always existed but was unknown or harnessed before 300 years ago. Like the gems encrusted in rock, we must work to find and extract them. The Unity of Humanity existed from the beginning yet it lay dormant until God through Bahá'u'lláh unveiled its beauty. We as individuals do not comprehend the true power of this attribute to further and prosper the civilization of mankind. This spiritual reality is the cornerstone of the civilization for the next 500,000 years! How can we begin to even glimpse a twinkle of its true strength?

In my daily life, with the pace and pomp, the patterns and pressures, I often fail to reflect on the principle of unity. It is important but conscious knowledge does not seem to bring immediate relief to any of my stresses. And

yet it is there unconsciously, knowledge of the unity does bring comfort and aids in resolving conflict at times.

Our society is in chaos and is aflame with self. We cheer the fate of communism yet fail to see our own. Robert Bly puts it:

"The Russians are now taking into their hands the ashes of incompetent industry, collectivized farming, lies, Stalinist paranoia, military machoism, the Gulags, Leninist madness, and so on. We have to respect that; perhaps because they handle ashes they have ideas."

"It's sad that the United States still stubbornly refuses to pick up the ashes we have created in the last four decades. Our agricultural policy is ashes, our schools are ashes, the treatment of blacks is all ashes, the trade deficit is ashes the environmental policy is ashes, the poverty of women and children is ashes."
(Iron John, A book About Men Robert Bly Page 226-227)

Our society is not at an end but, like the image of the Phoenix, will rise out of the ashes and soar in the heights of the heavens. We have made mistakes, bad choices but we are capable and able to change at any instant. We can adapt and remold our society to the guidance of Bahá'u'lláh if we choose. In the end there is a beginning, as you approach the bottom of the hoop of life you reach the point of ascension in the continuum.

God doesn't want us to fight racism! We need to be examples of the unity of mankind. To build an environment where diversity is welcomed and appreciated. Our focus, our vision must be the unity of mankind. We have been called upon to be the example for the rest of the family of man, to develop a bond between all men regardless of color, creed, nationality, or class. It seems at first to be an overwhelming task. My goal in being a Bahá'í isn't to say "Look at me, Follow me, Be as I am" Yet I sing those words here. I shun the spotlight, the intimacy of my own faults, humble me and beg to be left alone to be dwelt with in privacy. But this is not what our Lord God has asked of us.

We don't have to pull the walls of the institutions of racism down. God will take care of that! We must have a shelter of unity that all can flock to. The refuge in the storm.

We must be sensitive to the super structure of Racism in this country to not be entangled in its grasp. In our lives, jobs, social and spiritual, we must provide the opportunity of unity.

. And when we look at what Bahá'u'lláh teaches us, it isn't a difficult task. He asks each of us to go out of our comfort zone and consort with all in utmost harmony and unity. When we do things, we should involve others that are different and in a spirit of unity develop the appreciation of the value and assistance that a unified, diverse group can assert in the world! To show the peoples of the world it is possible to live together and to expose them to the brilliant future that this unity will bring. We have to work and play and eat and pray together. We should create an atmosphere of diversity in everything we do. In the beginning it will be difficult and awkward but we must continue if we are to be counted as the servants of Bahá'u'lláh.

The truth of Bahá'u'lláh's words are so powerful, yet men and women can block out all truth and light if they choose to live in the closet of fear and hate. Any fair minded soul who investigates the principles and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh can not but say that they are true and correct unless their hearts are locked away and guarded by the sentries of distrust and separation. We must build trust where there is fear, friendship where there is animosity, justice where there is waywardness, compassion where there is indifference. Joy and happiness and prosperity will occur only where there is unity.

We Bahá'is don't have to do anything more or less than to love each other, to truly care and cherish each other. This will change the world and with the words of Bahá'u'lláh to guide us and the fire of the unity in our hearts, we will become the stability and center of humanity. The foundation and pivot of the civilization of mankind is its unity!

I have collected some quotations from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh that contain the word unity. I found it interesting that there seem to be three main subjects in these quotes, The Unity of God, The Unity of the Manifestations of God, and The Unity of Mankind.