



RACIAL EQUALITY

A prayer to begin with

O Thou kind Lord! O Thou Who art generous and merciful! We are servants of Thy threshold and are gathered beneath the sheltering shadow of Thy divine unity. The sun of Thy mercy is shining upon all, and the clouds of Thy bounty shower upon all. Thy gifts encompass all, Thy loving providence sustains all, Thy protection overshadows all, and the glances of Thy favor are cast upon all. O Lord! Grant Thine infinite bestowals, and let the light of Thy guidance shine. Illumine the eyes, gladden the hearts with abiding joy. Confer a new spirit upon all people and bestow upon them eternal life. Unlock the gates of true understanding and let the light of faith shine resplendent. Gather all people beneath the shadow of Thy bounty and cause them to unite in harmony, so that they may become as the rays of one sun, as the waves of one ocean, and as the fruit of one tree. May they drink from the same fountain. May they be refreshed by the same breeze. May they receive illumination from the same source of light.

Thou art the Giver, the Merciful, the Omnipotent.

—*Abdu'l-Bahá*

The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord. If you meet those of different race and color from yourself, do not mistrust them and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality, but rather be glad and show them kindness. Think of them as different colored roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity, and rejoice to be among them.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá’



No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

—Nelson Mandela

Racism is a profound deviation from the standard of true morality. It deprives a portion of humanity of the opportunity to cultivate and express the full range of their capability and to live a meaningful and flourishing life, while blighting the progress of the rest of humankind. It cannot be rooted out by contest and conflict. It must be supplanted by the establishment of just relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions of society that will uplift all and will not designate anyone as “other”. The change required is not merely social and economic, but above all moral and spiritual.

—*The Universal House of Justice*

Ultimately, the power to transform the world is effected by love, love originating from the relationship with the divine, love ablaze among members of a community, love extended without restriction to every human being. This divine love, ignited by the Word of God, is disseminated by enkindled souls through intimate conversations that create new susceptibilities in human hearts, open minds to moral persuasion, and loosen the hold of biased norms and social systems so that they can gradually take on a new form in keeping with the requirements of humanity's age of maturity. You are channels for this divine love; let it flow through you to all who cross your path.

—*The Universal House of Justice*

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.



—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Let neither think that such a problem can either easily or immediately be resolved. Let neither think that they can wait confidently for the solution of this problem until the initiative has been taken, and the favorable circumstances created, by agencies that stand outside the orbit of their Faith. Let neither think that anything short of genuine love, extreme patience, true humility, consummate tact, sound initiative, mature wisdom, and deliberate, persistent, and prayerful effort, can succeed in blotting out the stain which this patent evil has left on the fair name of their common country.

—*Shoghi Effendi*

...the earth will become
illuminated with the light of God.
That light is the light of unity.

—Bahá'u'lláh



Racism persists precisely because it is deeply rooted in outdated attitudes and erroneous beliefs.

Accordingly, any campaign to eradicate racism must change those attitudes and beliefs. Although necessary, political action alone cannot offer a permanent solution. In the Bahá'í view, racism will be eliminated only when the peoples of the world are convinced of the oneness of humankind and proceed to reconstruct their lives and their societies on that basis.

The recognition of the oneness of mankind would require the abandonment of all doctrines of superiority, many of which still persist implicitly despite our preoccupation with its more obvious forms such as apartheid. More importantly, by establishing the foundation for true co-operation, the recognition of this principle would raise civilisation to a new level. At this higher level, no one need fear oppression, even those who were formerly oppressors. The sharing of power and responsibility among all citizens can then be implemented without fear, through appropriate legal measures and equitable social and economic policies.

—Bahá'í International Community

History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.

—Maya Angelou

Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring.

—Bahá'u'lláh

When you love a member of your family or a compatriot, let it be with a ray of the Infinite Love! Let it be in God, and for God! Wherever you find the attributes of God love that person, whether he be of your family or of another. Shed the light of a boundless love on every human being whom you meet, whether of your country, your race, your political party, or of any other nation, color or shade of political opinion. Heaven will support you while you work in this ingathering of the scattered peoples of the world beneath the shadow of the almighty tent of unity.

—*Abdu'l-Bahá*



Only if you perceive honour and nobility in every human being...will you be able to champion the cause of justice.

—The Universal House of Justice

Questions for discussion

- Is racism a problem only for those who are oppressed? How does it effect the rest of humanity?
- How does the example of music help us to understand the beauty of diversity in the human family and how we can be a source of strength and power when we come together in harmony?
- What holds the ultimate power to transform the world? How do we manifest this in our lives as an effective form of social action? What are practical steps we can take starting today?
- What is required for the oneness of humankind to be fully recognized by all?
- What qualities are required of a “champion of justice”?