

The Waves of One Sea

A Compilation on Unity in the Bahá'í Writings

By Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Compiled by Ron Shigeta

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I. REFLECTIONS OF GLORY: THE NATURE OF UNITY

O Son of Man!

My eternity is My creation, I have created it for thee. Make it the garment of thy temple. My unity is My handiwork; I have wrought it for thee; clothe thyself therewith, that thou mayest be to all eternity the revelation of My everlasting being.

- Bahá'u'lláh - Arabic *Hidden Words* #64

Unity as The Radiance of God

What is real unity? When we observe the human world, we find various collective expressions of unity therein. For instance, man is distinguished from the animal by his degree, or kingdom. This comprehensive distinction includes all the posterity of Adam and constitutes one great household or human family, which may be considered the fundamental or physical unity of mankind. Furthermore, a distinction exists between various groups of humankind according to lineage, each group forming a racial unity separate from the others. There is also the unity of tongue among those who use the same language as a means of communication; national unity where various peoples live under one form of government such as French, German, British, etc.; and political unity, which conserves the civil rights of parties or factions of the same government. All these unities are imaginary and without real foundation, for no real result proceeds from them. The purpose of true unity is real and divine outcomes. From these

limited unities mentioned only limited outcomes proceed, whereas unlimited unity produces unlimited result. For instance, from the limited unity of race or nationality alone and solitary; there are no unlimited or universal outcomes from it.

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.

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.

Another unity is the spiritual unity which emanates from the breaths of the Holy Spirit. This is greater than the unity of mankind. Human unity or solidarity may be likened to the body, whereas unity from the breaths of the Holy Spirit is the spirit animating the body. This is a perfect unity. It creates such a condition in mankind that each one will make sacrifices for the other, and the utmost desire will be to forfeit life and all that pertains to it in behalf of another's good. This is the unity which existed among the disciples of Jesus Christ and bound together the Prophets and holy Souls of the past. It is the unity which through the influence of the divine spirit is permeating the Bahá'ís so that each offers his life for the other and strives with all sincerity to attain his good pleasure.

This is the unity which caused twenty thousand people in Persia to give their lives in love and devotion to it. It made the Báb the target of a thousand arrows and caused Bahá'u'lláh to suffer exile and imprisonment forty years. This unity is the very spirit of the body of the world. It is impossible for the body of the world to become quickened with life without its vivification. Jesus Christ—may my life be a sacrifice to Him!—promulgated this unity among mankind. Every soul who believed in Jesus Christ

became revived and resuscitated through this spirit, attained to the zenith of eternal glory, realized the everlasting life, experienced the second birth and rose to the acme of good fortune.

In the Word of God there is still another unity—the oneness of the Manifestations of God, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, Muhammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. This is a unity divine, heavenly, radiant, merciful—the one reality appearing in its successive Manifestations. For instance, the sun is one and the same, but its points of dawning are various. During the summer season it rises from the northern point of the ecliptic; in winter it appears from the southern point of rising. Each month between, it appears from a certain zodiacal position. Although these dawning points are different, the sun is the same sun which has appeared from them all. The significance is the reality of Prophethood which is symbolized by the sun, and the holy Manifestations are the dawning places or zodiacal points.

There is also the divine unity or entity, which is sanctified above all concept of humanity. It cannot be comprehended nor conceived because it is infinite reality and cannot become finite. Human minds are incapable of surrounding that reality because all thoughts and conceptions of it are finite, intellectual creations and not the reality of Divine Being which alone knows itself. For example, if we form a conception of Divinity as a living, almighty, self-subsisting, eternal Being, this is only a concept apprehended by a human intellectual reality. It would not be the outward, visible reality, which is beyond the power of human mind to conceive or encompass. We ourselves have an external, visible entity; but even our concept of it is the product of our own brain and limited comprehension. The reality of Divinity is sanctified above this degree of knowing and realization. It has ever been hidden and secluded in its own holiness and sanctity above our comprehending. Although it transcends our realization, its lights, bestowals, traces and virtues have become manifest in the realities of the Prophets, even as the sun becomes resplendent in various mirrors. These holy realities are as reflectors, and the reality of Divinity is as the sun, which, although it is reflected from the mirrors, and its virtues and perfections become resplendent therein, does not stoop from its own station of majesty and glory and seek abode in the mirrors; it remains in its heaven of sanctity. At most it is this: that its lights become manifest and evident in its mirrors or manifestations.

Therefore, its bounty proceeding from them is one bounty, but the recipients of that bounty are many. This is the unity of God; this is oneness—unity of Divinity, holy above ascent or descent, embodiment, comprehension or idealization—divine unity. The Prophets are its mirrors; its lights are revealed through Them; its virtues become resplendent in Them, but the Sun of Reality never descends from its own highest point

and station. This is unity, oneness, sanctity; this is glorification whereby we praise and adore God.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 190-193

Unity of the Manifestations of God

As a token of His mercy, however, and as a proof of His loving-kindness, He hath manifested unto men the Day Stars of His divine guidance, the Symbols of His divine unity, and hath ordained the knowledge of these sanctified Beings to be identical with the knowledge of His own Self.

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Gleanings*, XXI

Unity of Created Things

In every age and cycle He hath, through the splendid light shed by the Manifestations of His wondrous Essence, recreated all things, so that whatsoever reflecteth in the heavens and on the earth the signs of His glory may not be deprived of the outpourings of His mercy, nor despair of the showers of His favors. How all-encompassing are the wonders of His boundless grace! Behold how they have pervaded the whole of creation. Such is their virtue that not a single atom in the entire universe can be found which doth not declare the evidences of His might, which doth not glorify His holy Name, or is not expressive of the effulgent light of His unity.

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Gleanings*, XXVI

The Essence of Belief in Unity

Regard thou the one true God as One Who is apart from, and immeasurably exalted above, all created things. The whole universe reflecteth His glory, while He is Himself independent of, and transcendeth His creatures. This is the true meaning of Divine unity.

...

The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence as one and the same. By this is meant that whatever pertaineth to the former,

all His acts and doings, whatever He ordaineth or forbiddeth, should be considered, in all their aspects, and under all circumstances, and without any reservation, as identical with the Will of God Himself. This is the loftiest station to which a true believer in the unity of God can ever hope to attain.

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Gleanings*, LXXXIV

Unity and Individuality

How wondrous is the unity of the Living, the Ever-Abiding God—a unity which is exalted above all limitations, that transcendeth the comprehension of all created things! He hath, from everlasting, dwelt in His inaccessible habitation of holiness and glory, and will unto everlasting continue to be enthroned upon the heights of His independent sovereignty and grandeur. How lofty hath been His incorruptible Essence, how completely independent of the knowledge of all created things, and how immensely exalted will it remain above the praise of all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth!

From the exalted source, and out of the essence of His favor and bounty He hath entrusted every created thing with a sign of His knowledge, so that none of His creatures may be deprived of its share in expressing, each according to its capacity and rank, this knowledge. This sign is the mirror of His beauty in the world of creation. The greater the effort exerted for the refinement of this sublime and noble mirror, the more faithfully will it be made to reflect the glory of the names and attributes of God, and reveal the wonders of His signs and knowledge. Every created thing will be enabled (so great is this reflecting power) to reveal the potentialities of its pre-ordained station, will recognize its capacity and limitations, and will testify to the truth that “He, verily, is God; there is none other God besides Him.”...

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Gleanings*, CXXIV

True Unity

It behoveth thee to consecrate thyself to the Will of God. Whatsoever hath been revealed in His Tablets is but a reflection of His Will. So complete must be thy consecration, that every trace of worldly desire will be washed from thine heart. This is the meaning of true unity.

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Gleanings*, CLX

The Peerless Lord

Thy unity is inscrutable, O my God, to all except them that have recognized Him Who is the Manifestation of Thy singleness and the Day-Spring of Thy oneness. Whoso assigneth a rival unto Him hath assigned a rival unto Thee, and whoso hath set up a peer for Him hath set up a peer for Thyself. No, no, none can withstand Thee in the whole of creation. Thou hast everlastingly been exalted far above all comparison and likeness. Thy oneness hath been demonstrated by the oneness of Him Who is the Dawning-Place of Thy Revelation. Whosoever denieth this, hath denied Thy unity, and disputed with Thee about Thy sovereignty, and contended with Thee in Thy realm, and repudiated Thy commandments.

Assist Thou Thy servants, O my Lord, to recognize Thy unity and to declare Thy oneness, that all may gather together around what Thou didst desire in this Day whereon the sun of Thine essence hath shone forth above the horizon of Thy will, and the moon of Thine own being hath risen from the Day-Spring of Thy behest. Thou art He, O my Lord, from Whose knowledge nothing whatsoever escapeth, and Whom no one can frustrate. Thou doest Thy pleasure, by Thy sovereignty that overshadoweth the worlds.

Thou well knowest, O my God, my Best-Beloved, that naught can quench the thirst I suffer in my separation from Thee except the waters of Thy presence, and that the tumult of my heart can never be stilled save through the living fountain of my reunion with Thee. Send down, then, upon me, O my Lord, out of the heaven of Thy bounty what will draw me nearer unto the chalice of Thy gifts, and make me able to quaff the choice sealed Wine, Whose seal hath been loosed in Thy name, and from Which the sweet savors of Thy days have been shed abroad. Thou, in truth, art the All-Bountiful, Whose grace is infinite.

The whole universe testifieth to Thy generosity. Have mercy, then, upon me by Thy graciousness, and deal bountifully with me through the power of Thy sovereignty, and suffer me to enjoy near access to Thee by Thy manifold favors. Thou, truly, art the Great Giver, the Almighty, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Bountiful

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Prayers and Meditations* XLI

Talk at Columbia University.

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. 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.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 66

Religious Unity and the Peace of Mankind

What then is the source of enmity and alienation among humankind? Whence this conflict and strife? The real underlying cause is lack of religious unity and association for in each of the great religions we find superstition, blind imitation of creeds, and theological formulae adhered to instead of the divine fundamentals, causing difference and divergence among mankind instead of agreement and fellowship. Consequently strife, hatred and warfare have arisen, based upon this divergence and separation. If we investigate the foundations of the divine religions, we find them to be one, absolutely changeless and never subject to transformation.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 81

The Renewal of Unity

In brief, His Holiness Moses—Upon whom be peace!—founded the law of God, purified the morals of the people of Israel and gave them an impetus toward nobler and higher attainments. But after the departure of His Holiness Moses, following the decline of the glory of Solomon's era and during the reign of Jeroboam there came a great change in this nation. The high ethical standards and spiritual perfections ceased to exist. Conditions and morals became corrupt, religion was debased and the perfect principles

of the Mosaic law were obscured in superstition and polytheism. War and strife arose among the tribes and their unity was destroyed. The followers of Jeroboam declared themselves rightful and valid in kingly succession, and the supporters of Rehoboam made the same claim. Finally the tribes were torn asunder by hostility and hatred, the glory of Israel was eclipsed and so complete was the degradation, that a golden calf was set up as an object of worship in the city of Tyre. Thereupon God sent Elijah the prophet who redeemed the people, renewed the law of God and established an era of new life for Israel.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Foundations of World Unity*, pp. 95-96

The Underlying Reality

This underlying reality is the love of humanity. For God is one and humanity is one, and the only creed of the prophets is love and unity.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 99

Unity of Spirit

The love which exists between the hearts of believers is prompted by the ideal of the unity of spirits. This love is attained through the knowledge of God, so that men see the Divine Love reflected in the heart. Each sees in the other the Beauty of God reflected in the soul, and finding this point of similarity, they are attracted to one another in love. This love will make all men the waves of one sea, this love will make them all the stars of one heaven and the fruits of one tree. This love will bring the realization of true accord, the foundation of real unity.

But the love which sometimes exists between friends is not (true) love, because it is subject to transmutation; this is merely fascination. As the breeze blows, the slender trees yield. If the wind is in the East the tree leans to the West, and if the wind turns to the West the tree leans to the East. This kind of love is originated by the accidental conditions of life. This is not love, it is merely acquaintanceship; it is subject to change.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Paris Talks*, pp. 180-181

The Irresistible Advance of Divine Cause

You will see, therefore, that at the beginning the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh was almost unknown, but on account of being a divine Movement it grew and developed with irresistible spiritual power until in this day, wherever you travel—East or West—and in whatever country you journey, you will meet Bahá'í assemblies and institutions. This is an evidence that the Bahá'ís are spreading the blessings of unity and progressive development throughout the world under the direction of divine guidance and purpose, while other movements which are only temporary in their activities and accomplishments have no real, universal significance.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 44

The City of Divine Unity

In this station the truth of the unity of God and of the signs of His sanctity is established. Thou shalt indeed see them all rising above the bosom of God's might and embraced in the arms of His mercy; nor can any distinction be made between His bosom and His arms. To speak of change or transformation in this plane would be sheer blasphemy and utter impiety, for this is the station wherein the light of divine unity shineth forth, and the truth of His oneness is expressed, and the splendours of the everlasting Morn are reflected in lofty and faithful mirrors. By God! Were I to reveal the full measure of that which He hath ordained for this station, the souls of men would depart from their bodies, the inner realities of all things would be shaken in their foundations, they that dwell within the realms of creation would be dumbfounded, and those who move in the lands of allusion would fade into utter nothingness.

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 31-32

II. SERVICE TO THE KINGDOM: THE IMPORTANCE OF UNITY

It is my wish that they may be assisted to become servants of the heavenly Kingdom, captives in the service of the will of God. This captivity is freedom; this sacrifice is glorification; this labor is reward; this need is bestowal. For service in love for mankind is unity with God. He who serves has already entered the Kingdom and is seated at the right hand of his Lord.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 186

Unity and Divine Law

O ye that dwell on earth! The distinguishing feature that marketh the preeminent character of this Supreme Revelation consisteth in that We have, on the one hand, blotted out from the pages of God's holy Book whatsoever hath been the cause of strife, of malice and mischief amongst the children of men, and have, on the other, laid down the essential prerequisites of concord, of understanding, of complete and enduring unity. Well is it with them that keep My statutes.

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Gleanings*, XLIII

Cleave Wholly Unto God

If thou dost depart from following the things We have caused to descend upon thee and taught thee, thou wilt, assuredly, be derogating from that great and priceless honor. Return, then, and cleave wholly unto God, and cleanse thine heart from the world and all its vanities, and suffer not the love of any stranger to enter and dwell therein. Not until thou dost purify thine heart from every trace of such love can the brightness of the light of God shed its radiance upon it, for to none hath God given more than one heart. This, verily, hath been decreed and written down in His ancient Book. And as the human heart, as fashioned by God, is one and undivided, it behoveth thee to take heed that its affections be, also, one and undivided. Cleave thou, therefore, with the whole affection of thine heart, unto His love, and withdraw it from the love of any one besides Him, that He may aid thee to immerse thyself in the ocean of His unity, and enable thee to become a true upholder of His oneness. God is My witness. My sole purpose in revealing to thee these words is to sanctify thee from the transitory things of the earth, and aid thee to enter the realm of everlasting glory, that thou mayest, by the leave of God, be of them that abide and rule therein...

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Gleanings*, CXIV

The Purpose of Justice

The purpose of justice is the appearance of unity among men. The ocean of divine wisdom surgeth within this exalted word, while the books of the world cannot contain its inner significance. Were mankind to be adorned with this raiment, they would

behold the day-star of the utterance, “On that day God will satisfy everyone out of His abundance,” shining resplendent above the horizon of the world.

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Kalimát-i-Firdawsíyyih*, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 67

The Power of Unity

The purpose of religion as revealed from the heaven of God's holy Will is to establish unity and concord amongst the peoples of the world; make it not the cause of dissension and strife. The religion of God and His divine law are the most potent instruments and the surest of all means for the dawning of the light of unity amongst men. The progress of the world, the development of nations, the tranquillity of peoples, and the peace of all who dwell on earth are among the principles and ordinances of God. Religion bestoweth upon man the most precious of all gifts, offereth the cup of prosperity, imparteth eternal life, and showereth imperishable benefits upon mankind.

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Ishráqát*, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 129-130

The Use of Unity

It is certain that the greatest of instrumentalities for achieving the advancement and the glory of man, the supreme agency for the enlightenment and the redemption of the world, is love and fellowship and unity among all the members of the human race. Nothing can be effected in the world, not even conceivably, without unity and agreement, and the perfect means for engendering fellowship and union is true religion.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 73

Results of Unity

Now is the time for the lovers of God to raise high the banners of unity, to intone, in the assemblages of the world, the verses of friendship and love and to demonstrate to all that the grace of God is one. Thus will the tabernacles of holiness be upraised on the summits of the earth, gathering all peoples into the protective shadow of the Word of Oneness. This great bounty will dawn over the world at the time when the lovers of God shall arise to carry out His Teachings, and to scatter far and wide the fresh, sweet scents of universal love.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 23

Unity and Bahá'í Assemblies

It is the desire of the Lord God that the loved ones of God and the handmaids of the Merciful in the West should come closer together in harmony and unity as day followeth day, and until this is accomplished, the work will never go forward. The Spiritual Assemblies are collectively the most effective of all instruments for establishing unity and harmony. This matter is of the utmost importance; this is the magnet that draweth down the confirmations of God. If once the beauty of the unity of the friends—this Divine Beloved—be decked in the adornments of the Abhá Kingdom, it is certain that within a very short time those countries will become the Paradise of the All-Glorious, and that out of the west the splendours of unity will cast their bright rays over all the earth.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 89

Gratitude

Thy letter was received. Its contents became known. Thank thou God that thy house became the shelter and the nest of the birds of the Kingdom. The spiritual assembly was arranged. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in His heart, was present in your gathering and His spirit was gazing upon you.

In order to tender thanks for this gift, you must become engaged in creating harmony and union to such an extent that all of you may become as one soul and one spirit; that you may become as waves of one sea, breezes of one rose-garden, flowers of one meadow and trees of one orchard. You must devote your time to the training of yourselves and the guidance of souls.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 697-698

Importance of Unity to Overcome Troubles

Therefore, my utmost desire, firstly, is the accord and union and love of the believers and after that of all the people of the world.

Now, if unity and agreement is not established among the believers, I will become heartbroken and the afflictions will leave a greater imprint upon me. But if the

fragrance of love and unity among the believers is wafted to my nostrils, every trial will become a mercy, every unhappiness a joy, every difficulty an expansion, every misery a treasure and every hardship a felicity.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 119-120

Unity of Believers in the West

To be brief, it hath been decided by the Desire of God that union and harmony may day by day increase among the friends of God and maid-servants of the Merciful One, in the West. Not until this is realized will the affairs advance by any means whatever! And the greatest means for the union and harmony of all is Spiritual Meetings. This matter is very important and is as a magnet (to attract or) for divine confirmation. If the beauty of this Divine Beloved One — that is, unity of believers — does appear in the ornament of the Kingdom of Abhá, it is certain that those countries will, in a short time, become the Paradise of Abhá and the light of Unity (or Oneness) and Singleness will shine upon the whole world from the West.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 124-125

Bahá'is and Unity

O my friends! Endeavor to your utmost ability that, day by day, unity and harmony will increase and the love of God will so firmly capture the hearts that they will forget all save Him and be engrossed, night and day, in mentioning the Kingdom, the heavenly signs and the divine verses. If love, friendship, association and unity be established among the believers, the door of all significances will be opened and each believer of God will be able to explain and interpret all of the holy Books.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 647

III. THE EYE OF PERFECTION: PROMOTION OF UNITY

First, you must become united and agreed among yourselves. You must be exceedingly kind and loving toward each other, willing to forfeit life in the pathway of another's

happiness. You must be ready to sacrifice your possessions in another's behalf. The rich among you must show compassion toward the poor, and the well-to-do must look after those in distress. In Persia the friends offer their lives for each other, striving to assist and advance the interests and welfare of all the rest. They live in a perfect state of unity and agreement. Like the Persian friends you must be perfectly agreed and united to the extent and limit of sacrificing life. Your utmost desire must be to confer happiness upon each other. Each one must be the servant of the others, thoughtful of their comfort and welfare. In the path of God one must forget himself entirely. He must not consider his own pleasure but seek the pleasure of others. He must not desire glory nor gifts of bounty for himself but seek these gifts and blessings for his brothers and sisters. It is my hope that you may become like this, that you may attain to the supreme bestowal and be imbued with such spiritual qualities as to forget yourselves entirely and with heart and soul offer yourselves as sacrifices for the Blessed Perfection. You should have neither will nor desire of your own but seek everything for the beloved of God and live together in complete love and fellowship.

May the favors of Bahá'u'lláh surround you from all directions. This is the greatest bestowal and supreme bounty. These are the infinite favors of God.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 215

The Desire of the Good

It is Our wish and desire that every one of you may become a source of all goodness unto men, and an example of uprightness to mankind. Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbors. Fix your gaze upon Him Who is the Temple of God amongst men. He, in truth, hath offered up His life as a ransom for the redemption of the world. He, verily, is the All-Bountiful, the Gracious, the Most High. If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause. We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship. Thus counseleth you the All-Knowing, the Faithful. We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us. To this beareth witness every man of true understanding.

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Gleanings*, CXLVI

The Sublime Station of Unity

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.

Exert yourselves that ye may attain this transcendent and most sublime station, the station that can insure the protection and security of all mankind. This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations. So long, however, as the thick clouds of oppression, which obscure the daystar of justice, remain undispeled, it would be difficult for the glory of this station to be unveiled to men's eyes.

- Bahá'u'lláh - *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 14-15

Three Steps to Action

This is a brilliant century. Eyes are now open to the beauty of the oneness of humanity, of love and of brotherhood. The darkness of suppression will disappear and the light of unity will shine. We cannot bring love and unity to pass merely by talking of it. Knowledge is not enough. Wealth, science, education are good, we know: but we must also work and study to bring to maturity the fruit of knowledge.

Knowledge is the first step; resolve, the second step; action, its fulfillment, is the third step. To construct a building one must first of all make a plan, then one must have the power (money), then one can build. A society of Unity is formed, that is good—but meetings and discussions are not enough. In Egypt these meetings take place but there is only talk and no result. These meetings here in London are good, the knowledge and the intention are good, but how can there be a result without action? Today the force for Unity is the Holy Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh. He manifested this spirit of Unity. Bahá'u'lláh brings East and West together. Go back, search history, you will not find a precedent for this.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, pp. 54-55

Gratitude between the Races (Talk at Howard University)

I wish to say one thing of importance to both in order that the white race may be just and kind to the colored and that the colored race may in turn be grateful and appreciative toward the white. The great proclamation of liberty and emancipation from slavery was made upon this continent. A long bloody war was fought by white men for the sake of colored people. These white men forfeited their possessions and sacrificed their lives by thousands in order that colored men might be freed from bondage. The colored population of the United States of America are possibly not fully informed of the wide-reaching effect of this freedom and emancipation upon their colored brethren in Asia and Africa where even more terrible conditions of slavery existed. Influenced and impelled by the example of the United States, the European powers proclaimed universal liberty to the colored race and slavery ceased to exist. This effort and accomplishment by the white nations should never be lost sight of. Both races should rejoice in gratitude, for the institution of liberty and equality the accomplishment of unity between the colored and whites will be an assurance of the world's peace. Then racial prejudice, national prejudice, limited patriotism and religious bias will pass away and remain no longer.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Foundations of World Unity*, pp. 34-35

Radiate Unity

Let your hearts be filled with the great love of God, let it be felt by all; for every man is a servant of God, and all are entitled to a share of the Divine Bounty.

Especially to those whose thoughts are material and retrograde show the utmost love and patience, thereby winning them into the unity of fellowship by the radiance of your kindness.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Paris Talks*, p. 27

Effort

I charge you all that each one of you concentrate all the thoughts of your heart on love and unity. When a thought of war comes, oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love. Thoughts of war bring destruction to all harmony, well-being, restfulness and content.

Thoughts of love are constructive of brotherhood, peace, friendship, and happiness.

When soldiers of the world draw their swords to kill, soldiers of God clasp each

other's hands! So may all the savagery of man disappear by the Mercy of God, working through the pure in heart and the sincere of soul. Do not think the peace of the world an ideal impossible to attain! Nothing is impossible to the Divine Benevolence of God.

If you desire with all your heart, friendship with every race on earth, your thought, spiritual and positive, will spread; it will become the desire of others, growing stronger and stronger, until it reaches the minds of all men.

Do not despair! Work steadily. Sincerity and love will conquer hate. How many seemingly impossible events are coming to pass in these days! Set your faces steadily towards the Light of the World. Show love to all; "Love is the breath of the Holy Spirit in the heart of Man". Take courage! God never forsakes His children who strive and work and pray! Let your hearts be filled with the strenuous desire that tranquillity and harmony may encircle all this warring world. So will success crown your efforts, and with the universal brotherhood will come the Kingdom of God in peace and goodwill.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Paris Talks*, pp. 29-30

The Firm Foundation

Oh, friends of God! If ye will trust in the Word of God and be strong; if ye will follow the precepts of Bahá'u'lláh to tend the sick, raise the fallen, care for the poor and needy, give shelter to the destitute, protect the oppressed, comfort the sorrowful and love the world of humanity with all your hearts, then I say unto you that ere long this meeting-place will see a wonderful harvest. Day by day each member will advance and become more and more spiritual. But ye must have a firm foundation and your aims and ambitions must be clearly understood by each member.

They shall be as follows:

1. To show compassion and goodwill to all mankind.
2. To render service to humanity.
3. To endeavour to guide and enlighten those in darkness.
4. To be kind to everyone, and show forth affection to every living soul.
5. To be humble in your attitude towards God, to be constant in prayer to Him, so as to grow daily nearer to God.
6. To be so faithful and sincere in all your actions that every member may be known as embodying the qualities of honesty, love, faith, kindness, generosity, and courage. To be detached from all that is not God,

attracted by the Heavenly Breath—a divine soul; so that the world may know that a Bahá'í is a perfect being.

Strive to attain this at these meetings. Then, indeed and in truth will ye, the friends of God, come together with great joy! Render help one to the other, become as one man, having reached perfect unity.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Paris Talks*, pp. 73-74

The Establishment of Great Unity

Bahá'u'lláh said that we should love even our enemies and be to them as friends. If all men were obedient to this principle, the greatest unity and understanding would be established in the hearts of mankind.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Paris Talks*, p. 140

The Flowers of A Garden

As difference in degree of capacity exists among human souls, as difference in capability is found, therefore, individualities will differ one from another. But in reality this is a reason for unity and not for discord and enmity. If the flowers of a garden were all of one color, the effect would be monotonous to the eye; but if the colors are variegated, it is most pleasing and wonderful. The difference in adornment of color and capacity of reflection among the flowers gives the garden its beauty and charm. Therefore, although we are of different individualities, different in ideas and of various fragrances, let us strive like flowers of the same divine garden to live together in harmony. Even though each soul has its own individual perfume and color, all are reflecting the same light, all contributing fragrance to the same breeze which blows through the garden, all continuing to grow in complete harmony and accord. Become as waves of one sea, trees of one forest, growing in the utmost love, agreement and unity.

If you attain to such a capacity of love and unity, the Blessed Perfection will shower infinite graces of the spiritual Kingdom upon you, guide, protect and preserve you under the shadow of His Word, increase your happiness in this world and uphold you through all difficulties. Therefore, it is my hope that day by day you will become more and more effulgent in the horizon of heaven, advance nearer and nearer toward the Kingdom of Abhá, attain greater and greater bounties of the Blessed Perfection.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 24-25

Differences

O ye friends of God! Beware! Beware of differences!

By differences the Temple of God is razed to its very foundation, and by the blowing of the winds of disagreement the Blessed Tree is prevented from producing any fruit. By the intense cold of the diversity of opinions the rose-garden of Unity is withered, and the fire of the love of God is extinguished!

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 431

The Perfect Eye

You have good intentions; your purpose is the good pleasure of God; you desire to serve in the Kingdom of the Merciful One. Therefore, arise in the utmost power. Be in perfect unity. Never become angry with one another. Let your eyes be directed toward the kingdom of truth and not toward the world of creation.

Love the creatures for the sake of God and not for themselves. You will never become angry or impatient if you love them for the sake of God. Humanity is not perfect. There are imperfections in every human being, and you will always become unhappy if you look toward the people themselves. But if you look toward God, you will love them and be kind to them, for the world of God is the world of perfection and complete mercy. Therefore, do not look at the shortcomings of anybody; see with the sight of forgiveness. The imperfect eye beholds imperfections.

The eye that covers faults looks toward the Creator of souls.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 92

Consultation

In discussions look toward the reality without being self-opinionated. Let no one assert and insist upon his own mere opinion; nay, rather, let each investigate reality with the greatest love and fellowship. Consult upon every matter, and when one presents the point of view of reality itself, that shall be acceptable to all. Then will spiritual unity increase among you, individual illumination will be greater, happiness will be more

abundant, and you will draw nearer and nearer to the Kingdom of God.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 183

Agreement, Fellowship and Love

Next to the divine Manifestations come the believers whose characteristics are agreement, fellowship and love. The Bahá'í friends in Persia attained such a brotherhood and love that it really became a hindrance in the conduct of material affairs. Each one into whatever house of the friends he went considered himself the owner of the house, so to speak. There was no duality but complete mutuality of interests and love. The visiting friend would have no hesitation in opening the provision box and taking out enough food for his needs. They wore each other's clothes as their own when necessary. If in need of a hat or cloak, they would take and use it. The owner of the clothing would be thankful and grateful that the garment had gone. When he returned home, he would perhaps be told, "So and so was here and took away your coat." He would reply, "Praise be to God! I am so grateful to him. Praise be to God! I am so thankful I have been given this opportunity of showing my love for him." To such an extreme degree this love and fellowship expressed itself that Bahá'u'lláh commanded that no one should take possession of another's belongings unless presented with them. The intention is to show to what an extent unity and love prevailed among the Bahá'í friends in the East.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 208-209

The Fundamental Reality

Christ commanded that if we are smitten upon the right cheek, we should turn the other cheek also. Consider what is happening now in the Balkans. What conformity with the teachings of Christ do we witness in that deplorable picture? Has not man absolutely forgotten and forsaken the divine command of Christ? In fact, such discord and warfare are evidences of disagreement upon the non-essential precepts and laws of religious belief. Investigation of the one fundamental reality and allegiance to the essential unchanging principles of the Word of God can alone establish unity and love in human hearts.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 445-446

Character and Unity

O ye lovers of this wronged one! Cleanse ye your eyes, so that ye behold no man as different from yourselves. See ye no strangers; rather see all men as friends, for love and unity come hard when ye fix your gaze on otherness. And in this new and wondrous age, the Holy Writings say that we must be at one with every people; that we must see neither harshness nor injustice, neither malevolence, nor hostility, nor hate, but rather turn our eyes toward the heaven of ancient glory. For each of the creatures is a sign of God, and it was by the grace of the Lord and His power that each did step into the world; therefore they are not strangers, but in the family; not aliens, but friends, and to be treated as such.

Wherefore must the loved ones of God associate in affectionate fellowship with stranger and friend alike, showing forth to all the utmost loving-kindness, disregarding the degree of their capacity, never asking whether they deserve to be loved. In every instance let the friends be considerate and infinitely kind. Let them never be defeated by the malice of the people, by their aggression and their hate, no matter how intense. If others hurl their darts against you, offer them milk and honey in return; if they poison your lives, sweeten their souls; if they injure you, teach them how to be comforted; if they inflict a wound upon you, be a balm to their sores; if they sting you, hold to their lips a refreshing cup.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 27

Unity amongst men

Wherefore must the friends of God, with utter sanctity, with one accord, rise up in the spirit, in unity with one another, to such a degree that they will become even as one being and one soul. On such a plane as this, physical bodies play no part, rather doth the spirit take over and rule; and when its power encompasseth all then is spiritual union achieved. Strive ye by day and night to cultivate your unity to the fullest degree. Let your thoughts dwell on your own spiritual development, and close your eyes to the deficiencies of other souls. Act ye in such wise, showing forth pure and goodly deeds, and modesty and humility, that ye will cause others to be awakened.

Never is it the wish of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to see any being hurt, nor will He make anyone to grieve; for man can receive no greater gift than this, that he rejoice another's heart. I beg of God that ye will be bringers of joy, even as are the angels in Heaven.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 213

Unity and the Covenant

Now some of the mischief-makers, with many stratagems, are seeking leadership, and in order to reach this position they instil doubts among the friends that they may cause differences, and that these differences may result in their drawing a party to themselves. But the friends of God must be awake and must know that the scattering of these doubts hath as its motive personal desires and the achievement of leadership.

Do not disrupt Bahá'í unity, and know that this unity cannot be maintained save through faith in the Covenant of God.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 224

Unity of the Friends

Until such time, however, as the friends establish perfect unity among themselves, how can they summon others to harmony and peace?

That soul which hath itself not come alive,
Can it then hope another to revive?

...

The friends of God are supported by the Kingdom on high and they win their victories through the massed armies of the most great guidance. Thus for them every difficulty will be made smooth, every problem will most easily be solved.

Note ye how easily, where unity existeth in a given family, the affairs of that family are conducted; what progress the members of that family make, how they prosper in the world. Their concerns are in order, they enjoy comfort and tranquillity, they are secure, their position is assured, they come to be envied by all. Such a family but addeth to its stature and its lasting honour, as day succeedeth day. And if we widen out the sphere of unity a little to include the inhabitants of a village who seek to be loving and united, who associate with and are kind to one another, what great advances they will be seen to make, how secure and protected they will be. Then let us widen out the sphere a little more, let us take the inhabitants of a city, all of them together: if they establish the strongest bonds of unity among themselves, how far they will progress, even in a brief period and what power they will exert. And if the sphere of unity be still further widened out, that is, if the inhabitants of a whole country develop peaceable hearts, and if with all their hearts and souls they yearn to cooperate with one another and to live in unity, and if they become kind and loving to one

another, that country will achieve undying joy and lasting glory. Peace will it have, and plenty, and vast wealth.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 290-292

Essentiality of Unity

But the wise souls who are aware of the essential relationships emanating from the realities of things consider that one single matter cannot, by itself, influence the human reality as it ought and should, for until the minds of men become united, no important matter can be accomplished. At present universal peace is a matter of great importance, but unity of conscience is essential, so that the foundation of this matter may become secure, its establishment firm and its edifice strong.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 311

Purity

The beloved of God must each be the essence of purity and holiness; so may they be known by their purity, freedom and meekness in every land; they may drink from the eternal chalice of the love of God, enjoy its ecstasy, and through meeting the Beauty of Abhá, they should be joyful, active, aglow with zeal and wonderful. This is the station of the sincere. This is the quality of those who are firm. This is the illumination of the faces of those who are near.

Therefore, O ye friends of God, ye must in perfect purity attain spiritual unity and agreement to a degree that ye may express one spirit and one life.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 22-23

Unity is the first bounty of God

O maid-servant of God! Know thou, the first bounty from the True One is love, unity and harmony, and without these all the deeds pass in vain and give no result. Love is the result of the Manifestation and the glorious purpose of the rising of Light on the Mount, in the Sinai of the Forgiving Lord.

It is incumbent upon you (to act) with merciful harmony and spiritual unity, so that the bounties of your Lord may embrace you and make you as waves in this sacred, moving sea. This is seemly of the believing women! This is the spirit of the

assured women! This is the light of the peaceful women! This is the ultimate wish of the attracted women!

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 183-184
