

Meet Your Neighbor Introductions

Welcome everyone | My name is . . . | Time to meet your neighbor.

- Your name
- Your favorite thing about summer
- What you love about or hope for our community

Call to Action and Closing Blessing

The Writings of the Baha'i Faith offers guidance on Unity and Justice.

Unity & Justice, Selected Messages

1

O Son of Spirit!

The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

Bahá'u'lláh / Hidden Words, Part One, From the Arabic, Number 2.

2

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! **Set your faces towards unity,** and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you. There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you. This, verily, is the most exalted Word which the Mother Book hath sent down and revealed unto you. To this beareth witness the Tongue of Grandeur from His habitation of glory.

Bahá'u'lláh / Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXI

3

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.

Likewise, when you meet those whose opinions differ from your own, do not turn away your face from them. All are seeking truth, and there are many roads leading thereto. Truth has many aspects, but it remains always and forever one.

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 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.

'Abdu'l-Bahá / Paris Talks, Part One: 15.

4

We ask God to endow human souls with **justice** so that they may be fair, and may strive to provide for the comfort of all, that each member of humanity may pass his life in the utmost comfort and welfare. Then this material world will become the very paradise of the Kingdom, this elemental earth will be in a heavenly state and all the servants of God will live in the utmost joy, happiness and gladness. We must all strive and concentrate all our thoughts in order that such happiness may accrue to the world of humanity.

'Abdu'l-Bahá / The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 102.

5

O army of God! Praise be to God, Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch; be ye compassionate and kind to all the human race. Deal ye with strangers the same as with friends, cherish ye others just as ye would your own. Be ye a refuge to the fearful; bring ye rest and peace to the disturbed; make ye a provision for the destitute; be a treasury of riches for the poor; be a healing medicine for those who suffer pain; be ye doctor and nurse to the ailing; promote ye friendship, and honor, and conciliation, and devotion to God, in this world of nonexistence.

O army of God! Make ye a mighty effort: perchance ye can flood this earth with light, that this mud hut, the world, may become Paradise.

'Abdu'l-Bahá / Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 35.

6

What profit is there in agreeing that universal friendship is good, and talking of the solidarity of the human **race** as a grand ideal? Unless these thoughts are translated into the world of **action**, they are useless.

The wrong in the world continues to exist just because people talk only of their ideals, and do not strive to put them into practice. If actions took the place of words, the world's misery would very soon be changed into comfort.

One who does great good, and talks not of it, is on the way to perfection.

One who has accomplished a small good and magnifies it in his speech is worth very little.

'Abdu'l-Bahá / Paris Talks, Part One: 1.

The communities of “Other” in central MN

- Blacks / African Americans
- Native Americans
- Immigrants, ie, Somali's, Latinos
- Religions, political, national, gender, age, lifestyle, wealth disparities, etc.—anybody “different”; different opinion, viewpoint, life experience, expectations, educational attainment, etc.

Goal

- **Strengthen the bonds of unity and friendship in our community and our world.**

Forms of Action

Be an agent of change to shape a future that values diversity and justice.

1. **SELF-REFLECTION** (spiritual in nature; develop spiritual attributes and skills: be loving, patient, understanding, open-minded, truth-seeking, cleansing the soul of biases & prejudices, etc)
 - a. Take charge of your own social and spiritual development
 - b. Prayers
 - c. Meditation
 - d. Examination of personal subtle biases, prejudices, assumptions and stereotypes, fears that may exist
 - e. Openness to challenge existing assumptions
 - f. Openness to change / growth
 - g. Openness to actively listen to the viewpoints of others; see the world from their “shoes” and life experience
2. **LEARNING** (become informed) (we have much to learn from others)
 - a. Learn about systems of privilege, oppression, and complacency
 - b. Learn about our hidden / unspoken histories and bring them into the light
 - c. Learn about other cultures, other lifestyles, living conditions
 - d. Attend / participate in class / online events, workshops, seminars, study groups, deepenings, etc. on race / justice issues (Many available locally as well as online)
 - e. Be informed about the suffering and challenges that others face - how to offer relief
 - f. Search for Truth (and challenge your sources of information for accuracy and completeness)
 - g. Accept the burden of history with acknowledgment and grace, advocate change
3. **ADVOCACY and ACTION** (be a change agent)
 - a. Engage and welcome others into your lives; something as simple as a spontaneous smile, a friendly wave, a warm and engaging attitude, a kind comment; foster a spirit of friendship and intimacy that transcends the barriers of race and class; radiate a spirit of love and inclusiveness
 - b. Volunteer. Engage in individual and collective service for the betterment of the world.
 - c. Offer emotional, physical, financial support to individuals, agencies, change initiatives
 - d. Seek policy changes
 - e. Seek changes to laws
 - f. Contact legislators, city councils, school boards, mayors with policy changes and changes to existing law
 - g. Vote
 - h. Social action; Become an “**active**” agent for change
 - i. **Care** about others; *“Be ye a refuge to the fearful; bring ye rest and peace to the disturbed; make ye a provision for the destitute; be a treasury of riches for the poor; be a healing medicine for those who suffer pain; be ye doctor and nurse to the ailing; promote ye friendship, and honor, and conciliation . . .”*
 - j. **Speak out!** Challenge misinformation, racist and prejudicial comments and treatment. Engage people in positive discourse on the issues.
 - k. Provide spiritual and moral education for the young; to develop an upright character

Call to Action

“Let us consecrate ourselves to the creation of a world in which knowledge will be the province of all; where there are no limitations imposed upon a soul by virtue of race, gender, or creed; where the material and spiritual aspects of life are in harmony; and where all of the truths essential for human progress are held sacred.”

“Blessed is he who mingleth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love.”

“It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action. . .”

- Everyone has a role to play – even children and youth. Model positive social attitudes.
- Ponder and hold in your mind, at least one “action” that you plan on doing to advance unity and Justice
- Commit to it – **AND DO IT!!**

“Go forward, then, with faith—faith that what you are striving to accomplish is God’s will for the day in which we live. That it is His will for humanity to live as one family; that it is His will for every single human being to live up to his or her full potential; that it is His will for peace and justice to fill every land and for love to reign in every heart.”

Closing Prayer

O my God! O my God! Verily, I invoke Thee and supplicate before Thy threshold, asking Thee that all Thy mercies may descend upon these souls. Specialize them for Thy favor and Thy truth.

O Lord! Unite and bind together the hearts, join in accord all the souls, and exhilarate the spirits through the signs of Thy sanctity and oneness. O Lord! Make these faces radiant through the light of Thy oneness. Strengthen the loins of Thy servants in the service of Thy kingdom.

O Lord, Thou possessor of infinite mercy! O Lord of forgiveness and pardon! Forgive our sins, pardon our shortcomings, and cause us to turn to the kingdom of Thy clemency, invoking the kingdom of might and power, humble at Thy shrine and submissive before the glory of Thine evidences.

O Lord God! Make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the garden, united, agreed through the bounties of Thy love. O Lord! Dilate the breasts through the signs of Thy oneness, and make all mankind as stars shining from the same height of glory, as perfect fruits growing upon Thy tree of life.

Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the Self-Subsistent, the Giver, the Forgiving, the Pardoner, the Omniscient, the One Creator.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá”