



human race boasts an infinite variety of personality, customs, interests, appearance, beliefs and language. The challenge for human beings at this stage of development is to unite as one organic whole, delighting in the differences which make each member of the human family unique.

"World order can be founded only on an unshakeable consciousness of the oneness of mankind, a spiritual truth which all the human sciences confirm.

Anthropology, physiology, psychology, recognise only one human species, albeit infinitely varied in the secondary aspects of life."

Over the centuries, different languages have developed, different tribes and peoples have gained dominance at the expense of others, and different nations have come into being. In many nation states, one language group, racial group or religious body has come to dominate the life of the nation. Bahá'ís believe that we should actively nurture the minority cultures. We can only evolve towards a new world order if every nation and every culture feels itself to be a valued part of the world family.

### REAL JUSTICE

The encouragement of minorities will have profound implications for the development of a system of world administration and for world economics. Justice in the sense of a fairer distribution of wealth must be the goal of all economic efforts. Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, stated this as one of God's main teachings for this age:

"The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me..... By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others..... Verily justice is my gift to thee..... Set it then before thine eyes."

"No light can compare with the light of justice. The establishment of order in the world and the tranquillity of the nations depend upon it."

Within the Bahá'í administration, the elected Spiritual Assemblies usually consist of men and women from several ethnic and racial groups. If two individuals should receive an equal number of votes for a position, preference is given to one who comes from a minority group.

Bahá'u'lláh, over a hundred years ago, taught that a universal bill of human rights should be enacted, that personal and industrial slavery should be abolished, and that every individual should be valued as a creation of God:

"An equal standard of human rights must be recognised and adopted. In the estimation of God all men are equal; there is no distinction or preferment for any soul in the dominion of His justice and equity."

### RACISM AND NATIONALISM

Racism is not the only problem caused by a lack of understanding of the oneness of mankind. Closely related to it is a sense of extreme nationalism. Because not every nation is recognised in the eyes of the world, and not every people has its political independence, there is at present a rebirth of fanatical nationalism, especially where something is needed to take the place of an abandoned political or religious philosophy.

In some countries where nationalism is on the rise, obvious racial minorities are the first target. The Universal House of Justice, which is the elected

world body of the Bahá'í community, writes:

"Unbridled nationalism, as distinguished from a sane and legitimate patriotism, must give way to a wider loyalty, to the love of humanity as a whole..... Love of all the world's peoples does not exclude love of one's country."

As the ethnic distribution of the world's peoples is very complex, the only sure solution for the national and racial conflicts in the world is more understanding and tolerance in relationships between peoples. Bahá'u'áh declares:

"The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

#### RELIGIOUS FANATICISM

For many people, religion has ceased to be a source of spiritual sustenance and moral guidance. Some see it instead as a tool of national solidarity or a cause of strife and division. If we were to examine the religions with an open mind, we would see them as all coming from the same Source, and all teaching broadly the same truths. Religious fanaticism would then vanish from society.

#### THE ELIMINATION OF PREJUDICE

"All prejudices, whether of religion, race, politics or nation, must be renounced, for these prejudices have caused the world's sickness. It is a grave malady which, unless arrested, is capable of causing the destruction of the whole human race. Every ruinous war, with its terrible bloodshed and misery, has been caused by one or other of these prejudices."

The Bahá'í community dedicates itself to creating united local communities representing people of diverse backgrounds and differing temperaments. It is now spread throughout the world. In global terms, about one third of the Bahá'ís live in Africa, and another third in Asia. Its message of economic justice and racial harmony appeals not just to minority peoples, but also to those from culturally dominant backgrounds who realise that there must be a spiritual solution to the world's problems. It promotes the idea that the oneness of mankind should be taught in every school in the world, as Bahá'ís believe that unity is necessary for the happiness of individuals and of nations:

"The accomplishment of unity between the [races] will be an assurance of the world's peace."

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