

World Embracing Vision

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Over 120 years ago, the prophet founder of the Baha'i Faith wrote, "It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens." And again, "Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self." He praised the person "who today dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race."

In the decades since then, the advances in our communication and transportation systems have indeed made the world a smaller place; we now live in what is called a "global community". And yet, prejudice, strife and violence based on nationality, religion, race, class and gender continue; and the "us" vs. "them" mindset persists. Technology seems to have changed the world faster than we could adjust to it. The rapid advances in technology, however, have not occurred by chance.

In the past centuries, the religions of the world not only guided the individual seeker on the path of personal salvation, but also prepared the human family for a future day when the life of the world would be entirely transformed. Baha'is believe that that promised day is come, that God's wish for today is the realization of the oneness of humankind and the establishment of peace among the nations, and that the rapid pace of scientific achievements in the past century, which has resulted in a highly interconnected world, is the direct consequence of that wish.

In order for the global community – including our own towns and cities – to be at peace, we need to first recognize the oneness of humanity. "Regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.", he wrote.

He also emphasized that peace will only come about when we unite as a world community – not only politically, but also spiritually because nothing but the unifying power of the Word of God is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts and convictions of the peoples of the world. He wrote, "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established."

Having a "world-embracing vision" requires a shift in one's thinking, which in turn affects one's actions:

"Every imperfect soul is self-centered and thinketh only of his own good. But as his thoughts expand a little he will begin to think of the welfare and comfort of his family. If his ideas still more widen, his concern will be the felicity of his fellow citizens; and if still they widen, he will be thinking of the glory of his land and of his race. But when ideas and views reach the utmost degree of expansion and attain the stage of perfection, then will he be interested in the exaltation of humankind...."

"Therefore, ye must also be thinking of everyone, so that mankind may be educated, character moderated and this world may turn into a Garden of Eden."