

# Unity in Diversity

Hamed Eshraghian

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Our latest struggles as a nation with human diversity remind me of one of my math classes. One would make an initial assumption and then continue with the proof. If the result was a contradiction, one would conclude that the original assumption must have been false.

Any assumption that leads to the marginalization or objectification of a group of people based on religion, race, gender, nationality or class, requires re-examination, as it contradicts God's teachings.

For example, any literal interpretation of the symbolic terms in the sacred scriptures, which may lead one to believe that the followers of world's other major religions are treading on the wrong path - that they are deprived of the grace of God and are barred from heaven - surely needs re-examination.

Similarly, any interpretation of history and biology that may engender feelings of superiority must be revisited.

"Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. ... Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.", wrote the prophet founder of the Baha'i faith over 125 years ago.

The late clergyman William Sloane Coffin pointed out that "Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with, and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to be without."

The more we can embrace diversity, the more we will be able to unite as a world community.

"The downfall of the attempts of governments and leaders to unite mankind is found in this - in the wrong message that we should see everyone as the same," author C. JoyBell C. writes. "This is the root of the failure of harmony. Because the truth is, we should not all see everyone as the same! We are not the same! We are made of different colours and we have different cultures. We are all different! But the key to this door is to look at these differences, respect these differences, learn from and about these differences, and grow in and with these differences. We are all different. We are not the same. But that's beautiful. And that's okay. In the quest for unity and peace, we cannot blind ourselves and expect to be all the same."

The Baha'i writings call for a broader allegiance: "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."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. also saw the need for this broader loyalty: "[M]ore and more, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. We must now give an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in our individual societies. This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class and nation is in reality a call for an all embracing, an unconditional love for all men. I'm not speaking of some sentimental and weak response which is little more than emotional bosh. I'm speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as a supreme unifying principle of life."

Let us then view the earth the way astronauts see it from space: as one country, with no boundaries, and humanity as its citizens.

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