

# Destiny of America

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July 4<sup>th</sup> marked 241<sup>st</sup> year of American history - a short period compared with the history of many countries in the East.

Yet during this relatively brief time, U.S. has become a world leader - militarily, economically and technologically. Silicon Valley itself has become the hub of innovation.

Despite this leadership, “[m]any people don’t know what this country is here for, and what we are here for,” wrote New York Times columnist David Brooks on March 21 in his column “The Unifying American Story”. “What’s needed is an act of imagination, somebody who can tell us what our goal is, and offer an ideal vision of what the country and the world should be,” Brooks wrote.

In 1912, the son of the prophet founder of the Baha’i faith travelled across the U.S. for nine months sharing his father’s message of peace and unity. In his talks – one of which was at Stanford University – he praised the U.S. and its people, and delineated two important roles they can play on the world stage.

First, is the role the U.S. can play in unifying the countries of the world because of its success in unifying its 50 states under one federal government.

Recalling the words of his father - “The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established... The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens” - he remarked, “May this American democracy be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement. May it be the first nation to proclaim the unity of mankind... The American people are indeed worthy of being the first to build the tabernacle of the great peace and proclaim the oneness of mankind.”

When asked by a high-level official with the federal government about the best way to promote the interests of the U.S., he replied: “You can best serve your country if you strive, in your capacity as a citizen of the world, to assist in the eventual application of the principle of federalism underlying the government of your own country to the relationships now existing between the peoples and nations of the world.”

America’s second role is spiritual in nature.

He remarked: “May America become the distributing center of spiritual enlightenment and all the world receive this heavenly blessing... May the inhabitants of this country become like angels of heaven with faces turned continually toward God. May all of them become servants of the omnipotent One. May they rise from their present material attainments to such a height that heavenly illumination may stream from this center to all the peoples of the world... This American nation is equipped and empowered to accomplish that which will adorn the pages of history, to become the envy of the world and be blest in both the East and the West for the triumph of its people... The American continent gives signs and evidences of very great advancement. Its future is even more promising, for its influence and illumination are far-reaching. It will lead all nations spiritually.”

In 1935, poet Langston Hughes called upon America to achieve its original dream:

*Let America be America again*

*Let it be the dream it used to be*

*Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—*

*Let it be that great strong land of love*

*Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme*

*That any man be crushed by one above.*

And despite all the flaws he saw, Hughes, too, had confidence in America's future:

*America never was America to me*

*And yet I swear this oath—*

*America will be!*

Let us feel fortunate to be living in this country and strive day and night to make the U.S. the unifier and the spiritual center of the world - by our words and deeds.