

Interconnectedness of Humanity

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*“Human beings are members of a whole,
In creation of one essence and soul.*

*“If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.*

*“If you've no sympathy for human pain,
The name of human you cannot retain!”*

The original of these verses, written by the prominent 13th century Persian Poet, Sa'di, adorn a 270 square foot Persian rug hung on a wall at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. The above translation is attributed to M. Aryanpoor.

The sentiment expressed by the poet is also reflected in the writings of the Baha'i Faith: “This endless universe is like the human body, and all its parts are connected one with another and are linked together in the utmost perfection. That is, in the same way that the parts, members, and organs of the human body are interconnected, and that they mutually assist, reinforce, and influence each other, so too are the parts and members of this endless universe connected with, and spiritually and materially influenced by, one another.” Hence, “the welfare of the part means the welfare of the whole, and the distress of the part brings distress to the whole.”

As the coronavirus has spread globally, it has more than ever brought the interconnectedness of the inhabitants of this small planet into focus.

In addition, this common adversary has forced humanity to respond in some truly amazing ways: The differences and divisions that only a few short months ago seemed so unsurmountable are being put aside; animosity and estrangement are giving way to cooperation and collaboration - not only within this country, but also among the nations of the world; and a sense of community is flourishing as people reach out to others and support one another.

In short, a tiny virus, which can't distinguish among our myriad outward differences, has caused us to become aware of our underlying oneness, and has made unity a necessity.

We have come to realize that despite superficial differences we are all a single species and are subject to the same changes and chances of this world. And, we have caught a glimpse of unity, without which, according to the Baha'i writings, “the well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable.”

As we experience the adverse and negative effects of the coronavirus in the coming weeks and months, let us remember the positive lessons that this ordeal imparts along the way. Then, may our newfound awareness stir our conscience and lead to actions that would, as the Baha'i writings say, “precipitate a radical change in the very conception of society, and coalesce ultimately the disjointed, the bleeding limbs of mankind into one body, single, organically united, and indivisible.”