

Family and Community from a Baha'i Perspective

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Abstract

We are now living in a world where people are dependent on each other and everyone shares the responsibility for the future of mankind. With this situation in mind, I would like to think about some of the fundamental issues that we are faced with. The first fundamental issue is that human beings, as a group, are responsible for building a better future. As Baha'u'llah states, without the oneness of humankind, we will not be able to see a truly peaceful and stable world.

The world community must be built on the basis of people united as one family; we need a society which is based on justice, the indispensable means to realize harmony among the people of the world.

In addition to justice, consultation must also be the basis of the human community. Through consultation, people can reach mature mutual understanding because all community members participate in the process. In other words, consultation makes it possible for justice to take specific shapes.

One obstacle blocking realization of a world community ruled by justice and consultation is the fact that human ability has not been developed sufficiently. Therefore, it is imperative for each of us to try to develop ourselves to the fullest extent. At the same time, science and technology must be evaluated in light of moral and spiritual principles. A great number of people are still plagued with poverty despite the fact that science and technology are being developed at an astounding speed. This indicates that science and technology have no power to solve the problems of poverty by themselves. This fact also indicates that the true purpose of living in this world and the eternal spiritual source of our life must be appreciated by everyone if economic problems are to be solved completely.

The same argument applies to the problem of unemployment. The real purpose of working is not commodity consumption but rather, making a useful contribution to the human community. Therefore we need a new work ethic.

A further basis of the human community is equality of the sexes, as stated by Baha'u'llah. An ideal community can be realized only when men and women share their experiences and understand each other. To make it possible for such drastic and significant changes to take place, we need central authority and power. Those in power must exert their authority to unite human communities in peace and prosperity instead of using their power and authority for their own interests. The old world order is about to collapse, but we still cannot foresee what kind of new order will replace it. It is evident, however, that Baha'u'llah's Teachings will be our guiding principles.