

Baha'i Perspectives on Seven Human Systems

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Greetings and Gratitude

To all who will read this message, greetings from your Baha'i sister and co-worker in Haifa. Due to the kind invitation of Counsellor Kimiko Schwerin, the Japanese Association for Baha'i Studies has provided the means of introducing to readers everywhere a new constellation of insights from the Sacred Writings of the Faith (and a few subsequent sources). The overarching framework of the seven human systems proposed here and the elaboration on the theme of human families was first prompted in 1994 by Swedish Auxiliary Board Member Berit Bergstromm, and formed the basis of a week of classes given by the author at the Baha'i Summer School in Sweden. The discoveries which came forth from an earnest search of the Writings were greatly assisted by the wise counsels and scholarly insights of Dr. Janet Khan. And so it is that circuitously, this particular talk which was first presented in Haifa in September 1994, comes to you in print, by the Will of the One in whose Hand are our souls.

Introduction

In "Baha'i Perspectives on Seven Human Systems" we will see how the religious dimension can so inform our perception as to bring highly complex social integrations (from the microcosm to the macrocosm of human experience), within range of our collective accomplishment.

The topic of Seven Human Systems offers an imaginative overview of the limitless ocean of human experience, drawing attention to sub-sets of humanity in which we all participate as though these were islands appearing out of the ocean. During this brief overview, we will be able to discern only the most striking, distinguishing features of each island world; and will be left to imagine the magnitude of its reality, and the import of the Baha'i Sacred Writings addressing each human system, until such time as a larger work can be published on these topics.

The overview does NOT suggest that seven systems exhaust ALL the worlds of human experience. Not at all. Indeed, Baha'i writings allude to countless worlds of God. But this particular overview DOES suggest that there are seven quite different planes of activity that we inhabit concurrently today — and that each of those specific human systems (according to the Revelation of Baha'u'llah) is striving toward a harmony which we can assist to come forth into practical reality.

Worlds — Systems — Families

The concept of seven-WORLDS-at-once is another way of addressing seven SYSTEMS of Baha'i principle, or seven FAMILIES of human experience. Each of the three concepts gives us some clues about what to watch for during the overview.

The idea of SYSTEM alerts us to watch for parts that are interacting with each other and have some kind of organizing principle or force that renders the system centrally self-regulated.

The idea of WORLD suggests a plane of experience in which one world is distinguished from another by its special characteristics; and within each world actors can be seen to take action that may be in harmony (or not) with the actions of each other.

Now, what the notion of FAMILY does is combine the features of systems and worlds, in the following way: The parts of a family are spiritual beings, who happen to be having a material experience. (This is a turnabout on the assumption that we are material beings who occasionally have a spiritual experience. In the Baha'i perspective we are spiritual beings temporarily having a material experience.) These parts are interacting with each other, and they are potentially self-regulating via divinely revealed ethics.

To the extent that there are several planes of activity to which we have access, we find various sets of human beings (families), and each of these sets has their respective principles of harmony.

Different Human Families in Seven Worlds of Experience

In the seven worlds which we will survey you will see DIFFERENT human families. And these are:

1. THE CLASSIC FAMILY centered on marriage, within which children are raised to maturity and three or four generations care for each other through all the stages of life.
2. A GLOBAL FAMILY containing all the peoples of the earth within which we can see emerging a social and economic justice that Baha'is refer to as a future global commonwealth, and which assumes equality of life for women and men.
3. A NATIONAL FAMILY containing all the residents within the borders of a state, at which level we see the education and civilization of humanity taking place (as Abdu'l-Baha described for us in *The Secret of Divine Civilization*), and also where the need for peace and unity among the races becomes clearly evident.

Unique among the planes of our experience is the one on which we establish ...

4. A FAMILY OF FRIENDSHIPS because on this one plane alone we CHOOSE a family for ourselves — all the others are imposed upon us by circumstances. And because this one is by choice, this is where we prove to ourselves just how much we are committed to unity.

Then we have...

5. A DAILY FAMILY — that cast of characters who await us every morning: the people in our office, on our bus, in our lunchroom. We don't need a TV for situation comedy or tragic soap opera — there will never be a DAY of our lives when we are without our very own!

Most subtle and secret of all the families in which we dwell is...

6. AN INNER FAMILY — This family is comprised of the living encyclopaedia of our own childhood / adolescence / early, middle, and late adulthood / and old age, AS WELL AS the entire multitude of everyone we have ever met! Since all this is inside, in a sense, the inner family contains and mirrors ALL the outer families. And it also CRAVES UNITY. The effort to integrate our life experience into a meaningful whole is the inner work of the soul, as surely as the Kingdom of God on earth is the outer work of the soul.

Well, you could easily feel that this is more than enough: five outer families run the gamut of concrete experience; and an inner family in which our soul experiences a unique Oneness. But there is one more family membership we cannot escape, and that is...

7. A HISTORICAL FAMILY — both backward into the exodus of generations who now reside in the worlds beyond, among what Baha'i Sacred Writings refer to as the Concourse on High, and forward into the multitudes of the future who will remember us as the champion builders of a united World Order. In the Baha'i perspective, members of the historical family, both backwards and forwards, KNOW WHO WE ARE, and though we may not know them by name, we share specific rights and responsibilities with them, as surely as we do in our other six families.

Consider then just how complex human experience is. Whereas the pinball games of yore had ONE set of rules and usually ONE speed; and early computer games had ONE set of rules and ACCELERATING speeds as you matured up through the levels of skill; the divine games of human experience have PARTICULAR rules and requirements on EACH plane, and they all happen AT ONCE !

Transition

You can appreciate how impractical it would be to treat these seven topics to any degree of depth in one brief lecture. What is therefore proposed is that we attempt two limited objectives:

- i) to identify some sources from the Baha'i Sacred Writings that seem to be especially rich in Revelation regarding each of these human systems, and
- ii) to introduce some themes, or sub-topics which emerge from the Revelation and seem to be particularly relevant to each system.

Let us first look at the FUNDAMENTAL PATTERN which underlies all the others — the Classic Family.

The Classic Family

There are many sources to which we can turn to find what the central Figures of the Baha'i Faith have said concerning the classic family. Among them are the compilations on Women, on Marriage, and on Family Life, and a commentary published in 1992 in the *Journal of Baha'i Studies* entitled "Rights and Responsibilities in the Baha'i Family System."

Our minds are burdened with old, mistaken, outworn ideas about the classic family. To prepare our minds to read these compilations and see with fresh eyes what is revealed in them, it is useful for us to entertain the thought that THE CLASSIC FAMILY HAS YET TO APPEAR on earth. No matter how good, bad, or indifferent we may judge our own family life to have been (so far), by definition, Baha'is anticipate that the classic family will appear in history ONLY as its prerequisite conditions appear: equality of life for women and men, universal education of children and adults, and Local Houses of Justice assisting the establishment of such a family system, where integrity of the family as a whole AND of the individuals within that family, are equally safeguarded.

The Baha'i Sacred Writings articulate a family system within which individuals are identified by sex and by generation. The rights granted within the family system, and the responsibilities required, vary according to whether one is a child, a spouse, a parent, and by extension a grandparent. Furthermore, particular distinctions are made between the male and female participants in the system. Not surprisingly social theory (among those unfamiliar with the Baha'i Revelation) has moved in the last few decades through a period of uni-sex thought, into a new period of gender-sensitive thought. As Baha'is we are

assured that great value conflicts can be transcended: family unity can be preserved without recourse to tyranny; and gender-sensitive distinctions can be maintained without violating equality. However this will not just happen without effort, education and example. Abdu'l-Baha admonishes us that "The family, being a human unit, must be educated according to the rules of sanctity. All the virtues must be taught the family." In other words, we don't yet know how it is supposed to be.

Rules of sanctity are indicated in the Writings with regard to marrying, fathering, mothering, being a daughter, being a son, and having parents. These rules of guidance are at times tender, poignant, surprising and even alarming, but upon examination, one could conclude that these system principles exhibit justice beyond anything the world has ever seen.

Contemplating the Baha'i Family System

Now it's very interesting to draw up a diagram of the Baha'i family system. Assign a position for the husband/father and the wife/mother; add in the son/brother and the daughter/sister; then indicate on the farther horizon of maturity one single point where those people of the age of grandfathers and grandmothers come to resemble each other more closely through attaining a more complete set of masculine and feminine virtues. This gives five points to the classic family, to which definitions can be anchored.

We can then, connect the dots, into a pentacle — an arbitrary solution, since we could have connected the dots with a circle. But give some consideration to the bonds revealed by this pentacle: those of husband and wife, of father and daughter, of mother and son, and then of grandchildren and grandparents.

Now, connect the dots with a pentagon, and notice the OTHER set of relations thus revealed: that of brother and sister, father and son, mother and daughter, and young parents with older parents. Consider how much we have to learn about all these relations, and how far we have to go in discovering the rules of sanctity, as 'Abdu'l-Baha says.

In the kind of guidance we find for the Baha'i family system, there appears a pattern of advice which will repeat itself in the families that follow. The point is this: we are never abandoned to vagueness, uncertainty, and moral drift. In each case, we are provided a firm and clear Baha'i principle — FOLLOWED by qualifying statements and conditions. For example, the lines of responsibility to provide something from parent-to-child are generally about education, and from child-to-parent generally are about obedience — parents are to be respected and feel contented "PROVIDED they deter thee not from gaining access to the Threshold of the Almighty, nor keep thee back from walking in the way of the Kingdom." [Abdu'l-Baha, quoted in the *Compilation on Family Life*, #843]

This provision, to offer obedience only when it leads to the Sacred Threshold (that is, toward human fulfillment as symbolized by attaining the presence of God) and is directed toward the Kingdom (that is, toward a civilization in this world reflective of the Creator) is an aspect of family life that is central to all human systems :

The purpose of each human system is to support the development of the spiritual potential of the people participating in that system.

Thus, the purpose of every family is to enable the people within it to grow; and concurrently, to provide a larger unity into which the parts can make their contribution and thus overcome their separateness, as drops do when they join a river and help it flow to the sea.

A Global Family

Now let us turn to another family that concerns Baha'is very much: a global family. Dramatic pronouncements on worldwide peace, prosperity, equality, and civilization are to be found in central Baha'i texts such as *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, letters of the Guardian in *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, and *The Promised Day Is Come*, and the *Statement on World Peace* addressed "To The Peoples of the World" by the Universal House of Justice in 1985.

From these sources emerge a rich depiction of what Baha'is foresee as a World Commonwealth. This ultimate planetary family is characterized in Baha'i scriptures by a "close and permanent" political unity, a global standard of justice, a "single code of international law". It will be fueled by the flow of prosperity and the "permanent removal of economic barriers". It will be governed by an infrastructure of institutions guided by Baha'i principle. (1977, *Compilation on Peace*, p. 200; *World Order* 1985, Evolution of the Lesser Peace) And the creativity of this global family will blossom forth as the fires of "racial animosity, religious strife and...militant nationalism" become transmuted into light of "an abiding consciousness of world citizenship". Despite the cynicism of a despairing world, this is the goal of a unified global family to which Baha'is are committed, and which we believe is realizable BECAUSE, in the words of the Universal House of Justice, "the coming of Baha'u'llah signals... a fresh manifestation of the direct involvement of God in history."

With the coming of the Manifestation, we feel "the outpouring of a heavenly grace that will enable all humanity to be free at last from conflict"—free that is to make its contribution to "world peace and divine civilization". And chief among these new contributors will be the women of the world, who 'Abdu'l-Baha assures us will "enter all branches of administration of society" and occupy "the highest levels in the human world".

Think about it. If this faltering world were a spaceship, then for a very long time men have stood ALONE on its brass and mahogany bridge trying to chart a safe course, with only HALF the necessary data! Men can take heart now that in all fields of cultural endeavor women are climbing the access ladder to the bridge, bringing with them the missing half of the data. Together, men and women can chart a successful course. Think of the new womankind as beautiful, brainy, and brave — fitting consorts for the best among mankind.

'Abdu'l-Baha speaks very firmly to ALL women (Baha'i and otherwise) in many of his speeches, admonishing them to PROVE that their capacity and abilities have been only latent due to disadvantages of opportunity. He stresses specific arts, science, agriculture and industry as areas where women should make practical contributions. But it is Baha'i men who are singled out from the generality (in a letter of the House of Justice) as having the opportunity to exemplify for a misguided mankind that a new approach is practical, in which aggression and force are replaced with cooperation and consultation.

A Family of Friendships

Of all of the worlds we will overview today, of all of the families we will examine, this is one of the most peculiar. It differs from the others in so many ways. As was mentioned in the introduction, this is the only family which is entirely by choice. Friendships CAN be avoided. Secondly, among the writings most germane to this family are two interesting sources from the United States — the land fascinated with freedom of choice. Thirdly, this family seems particularly significant for Baha'is in general whose emerging global culture is typified by travel and intense commitment, engendering many cherished

friendships that must then be surrendered to time and distance. Finally, this family affords the opportunity to address the latent question, “Which of these is my REAL family?”

Spiritual kinship and physical kinship

In the backs of our minds we may be thinking about this tour, “well this is all very interesting, but my life is organized around achieving harmony in my REAL family”, meaning the family in which I grew up, or the family into which I married, and so on. But an examination of the Baha’i Sacred Writings indicates that we have membership in at least these seven family systems at the same time, that we have a mission to live in each of these families according to Baha’i principle, and that when a value conflict appears, the classic family may not always be the one prioritized ahead of other families.

Specifically, a letter written on behalf of the Guardian, states the following: “Deep as are family ties, we must always remember that the spiritual ties are far deeper; they are everlasting and survive death.... You should do all in your power, through prayer and example, to open the eyes of your family to the Baha’i Faith, but do not grieve too much over their actions. Turn to your Baha’i brothers and sisters who are living with you in the light of the Kingdom.”

Freedom, Potential and the Diversity of Baha’i Friendships

As it happens, the global breadth of Baha’i friendships is so spectacularly diverse that it brings us to the next interesting aspect of this family. If you thought friendships were about keeping company and being comfortable, think again. Our Baha’i friendships can often take us beyond our comfort zone. And we are not always willing to do that. Ironic that in the national family which we just examined, our concern about freedom was that it would be constrained; BUT in the family of potential friendships, our concern about freedom is that there is more of it than we can easily handle, so we end up confining ourselves to familiar groups, when we should be taking opportunities to expand our horizons. We are assured it is worth the effort to seek the unknown. Educational materials prepared by American Baha’is maintain that when we try to relate to the unknown, it creates an energy (an anxiety) in us which calls forth new depths of knowing and loving — each new response from within ourselves is a bit of our latent spiritual capacity made manifest — a release of our human potential.

Another discovery from the Writings of Baha’u’llah is that the family of friendships is not so much about having friends as about being a friend to others through our actions and not just through our conversations. Any concrete, compassionate action illumines the world through the dynamic force of example, in a way that can restore brothers and sisters who have lost hope. Baha’u’llah informs us “One righteous act is endowed with a potency that can elevate the dust...tear every bond asunder...and hath the power to restore the force that hath spent itself and vanished...”

‘Abdu’l-Baha, the Perfect Exemplar

As much as we want to learn how to befriend others, as much as we seek out friends who embody virtues we want to acquire, as much as we would like to have a model to emulate, a mentor to coach us — to that degree can we turn in gratitude to the jewel in the family of friendships, the ultimate Friend, the Perfect Exemplar of Baha’i character, ‘Abdu’l-Baha. Of all the friends we could ever hope to meet, this

One, who is with us now, will have the most radical effect upon us. Baha'u'llah says "Render thanks unto God, O people, for His appearance; for verily His is the most great Favor unto you..." His appearance, His speech, His character, draw us forward — He is an irresistible friend who draws us forward to follow His footprints of servitude — no matter how unready we feel. This Friendship summons us. As the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States writes, "That God has favored man with the gift of a Perfect Exemplar testifies to the greatness of this day and to the heights of perfections which man is summoned to attain". God would not have granted us such a Friend, if He had not also endowed us with some hope of keeping company with that Friend — at whatever distance. 'Abdu'l-Baha himself assures us, as quoted by May Maxwell in *An Early Pilgrimage*: "...I am with you always, whether living or dead, I am with you to the end."

Just as well, because from here, it gets more difficult !

A Daily Family

In the Daily Family all our good intentions are tested. The Daily Family is the workshop, the studio, the factory, the rehearsal hall, the gymnasium, the hospital for all our good intentions. It is the place assigned to us, by God, where we are to practice being the people of Baha. Fortunately there is one consummate Baha'i source to which we can turn for unfailing advice on how to cope with the Daily Family, and that is *The Advent of Divine Justice*. For all those who like to joke that this life needs a user's manual— well, this is it!

The key to unscrambling all our daily predicaments is contained somewhere within its central themes of "rectitude of conduct", "a chaste, pure and holy life", "complete freedom from prejudice", and "the privilege of daily life".

If we could step back and look in on our entire day as though looking into a hologram, and see at a glance all the people and events, and ourselves as the central character following a path through the middle of it all — we would be able to see that only three things need to happen to have the perfect daily family:

One: we need to put straight the lines of relation between ourselves and all the people in our social context. We do that through rectitude of conduct — through justice, truthfulness, trustworthiness, distancing ourselves from what can defile us, and submitting to the Will of God for us in that setting.

Two: We need to clean up what lies within our own domain through living a chaste, pure and holy life. This of course includes abstinence, modest avoidance of extremes, decency and control of our carnal instincts. But did you notice recently that it also specifies in the text, "abandonment of frivolous conduct and trivial pleasures"? Won't it be painful to discover that a superficial life is as offensive to our Creator as a corrupt life. "Don't waste time!" — it seems to be telling us. Life is over quickly. Soon we will have to face the court of our Creator and what will we tell Him we DID with the life He gave us? Will we say to Him: "I went shopping"? "I gossiped with my friends about somebody else's business"?

Three — to have the perfect daily family, we have to fling open the gates of our hearts and lives in complete freedom from prejudice, so that the world can enter in, and we can venture forth from the smallness of where we began.

Lest all of this sound like too much hard work, *The Advent of Divine Justice* concludes with some dazzling statements about the privilege of daily life and the people we encounter there. It says: "The Concourse on High YEARN to return to this world... to render some service... to demonstrate their servitude." It says "Should a man, all alone, arise in the name of Baha, and put on the armor of His love, him will the Almighty cause to be victorious." Instead of waking up with a groan because we find ourselves in yet another workday, it says, "SPEED YE FORTH, from the horizon of power, in the name of your Lord, the Unconstrained." In these statements, we hear a divine voice assuring us absolutely that we are not only equal to the task of being peace-makers in the human system of daily life, but also that we will be amply content with the sense of satisfaction it brings.

And now we must speed forth to overfly the last two worlds in which we have families, and they are exotic worlds indeed.

The Inner Family

The inner family, for example, is invisible, and largely inaccessible to anyone else but us. Yet it is richly peopled with everyone we have ever been in the course of our lifetime, and everyone we have ever met. From this we are expected to make a unified whole, a meaning for our life, a single, signature identity by which we will be known in the worlds to come, — in other words — a soul-self. Our most precious and touching Baha'i Sacred Writings speak explicitly about this world and this family as we find when we read *The Seven Valleys* and *The Four Valleys*, *The Arabic Hidden Words* and *The Persian Hidden Words*, and the compilation entitled, *Excellence in All Things*.

Far from belittling the importance (not to mention, denying the existence) of the inner realities of human life, the sentiments confided to us by the Lord of the Age confirm that the inner realities of each soul are a TREASURY in the sight of God, and He urges us to turn inward, and engage with the family of realities within. While there IS an ego-self, vain and vulnerable to the delusions of the world, there is also a soul-self created for a destiny of knowing and loving God. And He wants us to raise up and educate that self. He says, "Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee..." and "...On this plane, the self is not rejected but beloved; it is well-pleasing and not to be shunned." Do you hear that He is saying there is an important work to be done on a plane of action that lies within; that this work is not self-centered or selfish or self-important after the manner of the outwardly directed ego?

This work is the essential work of the soul, what mediaeval Christians called the process of sanctification, of becoming ever cleaner within, clearer, more purified, more peaceful, more consolidated in one's intent upon knowing and loving our Creator. He wants us, even urges us to attend to this inner world. He says, "Strain every nerve to acquire both inner and outer perfection, for the fruit of the human tree hath ever been and will ever be perfections both within and without."

The Writings acknowledge the difficulties of this life, and the oppressive conditions we may experience from many sources. Any of these oppressions press down upon our capacity for free will and inhibit the spontaneous expression of joy and gratitude which would spring forth from the soul under natural conditions. Yet He tells us that the soul-self is a "stronghold", that we are to "enter therein that thou mayest abide in safety". Shoghi Effendi reminds us that the Master also experienced "the terrors of tyranny, the storms of incessant abuse, and the oppressiveness of humiliation".

Yet we are assured that we will not be overwhelmed, but can rise triumphant over all these conditions since He has “ordained for thy training every atom in existence...that thou mightest attain My everlasting dominion ...” He urges us to retake sovereignty over our hearts — where these hearts have become preoccupied with other people through fear, infatuation, grief, anger or any emotion that fixes the heart on another than Him alone. He says, “The human heart, which I have made the habitation of My beauty...thou didst give...to another than Me...” He says to shake off these tyrannies through “justice” and to “see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others” because only in this way can He commune directly with each of us.

He urges us to engage actively with whatever may be disturbing the peace of our dominion within. He says specifically “Although at the beginning, this plane is the realm of conflict, yet it endeth in attainment to the throne of splendor”. This is the world within, where the soul-self integrates and unites all that it has experienced, that it may fulfill its destiny and commune with its Lord.

Isn't that the ultimate? Aren't we done yet? Not quite. There is another invisible world that reaches beyond our own realm of experience, back immeasurably into the past and forward immeasurably into the future. And it is populated with...

A Historical Family

The names of these family members are largely beyond our reach. But in the Baha'i perspective the inverse is not true. They know us. Both the Concourse who were here before us and who now look in upon this material plane, and the generations who will follow and read about life in the days of the “champion builders” know who we are. And they are counting on us. We are a link in the ancient chain of the Faithful, a rank that must play its part in the eternal exodus of humanity from ignorance to ecstasy and praise.

If we look to sources such as Baha'i Prayers for the departed, to the compilation on *The Power of Divine Assistance* and to the *Persian Hidden Words* which address wealth, generosity and service to the poor, we will find that our mission to the Historical Family is clearly spelled out.

We are called upon to assist the ones who went before us, by praying that their souls continue to benefit from divine grace, forgiveness and mercy. While such services have been rendered before — say in the Eastern traditions that emphasize service to one's ancestors — the Baha'i description of the departed reaches beyond tribal family and specifies several different categories within the Concourse for whom we are responsible. It does speak of our “parents”, and the intercession of children for them; it does speak of the extended “kindred” of those of us who have embraced the Faith; but it also singles out “souls in ignorance” and acknowledges that the ocean of forgiveness can surge for them; and it speaks of great serviceful souls and asks that what they have achieved will be found acceptable and receive the good pleasure of God. So in our prayerful services those who have gone before, we are thus guided to be conscious, discriminating, and adapted to serve them.

A stunning description is given of what can happen when we call upon the powerful, holy ones who have gone before us into the Concourse, and enlist their aid in service to the Cause of God. It says that when we make mention of our Lord, “hosts of Divine inspiration shall descend...the Concourse on high, [each] bearing aloft a chalice of pure light...the unfailing help of the Company on high...[will]

unleash the bestowals of Heaven...hosts of the company...will defend [us]...and angels of the Abha Paradise ...will come down to [our] aid.”

Without this description, the life of a soul can seem very solitary, very lonely. But WITH this description of the reality of heavenly hosts, — willing — supremely powerful — and acquainted with our lives from the inside out — it would be the height of arrogance and self-importance for us to feel lonely. It would be like sitting at a party with a paper bag over our head! We can try, but we will never be alone again—forever. With such splendid assistance, we are to advance in maturity and become FRUITFUL, and provide for those who will follow. Baha’u’llah says “ye are the trees of My garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom.” We are to provide money for the education of children — (and illiterate adults are as restricted as children). We are to be generous, NOT ONLY for the sake of the initial beneficiaries, but because “To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adornest himself with My virtues.”

Conclusion

So there it is. Our tour is complete; the aircraft of this overview is beginning its descent. We have overflowed seven islands in the ocean of Baha’i Revelation; explored seven planes of action, seven worlds which we inhabit concurrently, every day of our lives. We have observed seven dramatically different human systems, families each with an integrity of its own, each potentially able to nurture the development of the members of that family, each poignantly in need of unity. We have examined Baha’i principles which indicate our mission to assist in the processes of unity in each of these families.

The perspectives afforded in these Writings are not in any way restricted to those who call themselves Baha’is. These colourful and promising vistas are laid open for all the world to see, for they offer the prospect that in all the human systems which we inhabit together, we will be able to find the means of fulfillment, of successful integration and harmonious unity.