

The Universal House of Justice - July 22 letter to the Baha'is of the United States  
Some questions for reflection and consultation

What does the July 22, 2020 message of the House of Justice addressed to the American Baha'i Community require of me?

Paragraph 1

What is the destiny of America anticipated in the Sacred Writings of the Baha'i Faith?

What mission did Abdu'l Baha entrust to the American Baha'i Community?

What are some examples of how you or other Baha'is in your community are seizing opportunities to play a part, however humble, in efforts to remedy the ills of our nation related to racial prejudice?

Paragraph 2

What are some examples of significant progress toward racial equality being set back and progress undermined in our nation's efforts to address racial equality and justice?

What have you learned in your own community or from others in recent years about translating Baha'u'llah's teachings into reality? How has this learning been applied in responding to current social challenges?

Paragraph 3

What are the concepts and approaches for social transformation that have developed in the current series of Plans that can be utilized to promote race unity in the context of community building, social action and engagement in social discourse as set out in the messages of the House of Justice?

How can these be deployed in a way that profoundly alters the thought and action required at this time?

Paragraph 4

What is the framework governing Baha'i activities? How do we use it to determine where to expend our energy, what to avoid and how we can make a distinctly moral and spiritual contribution?

Paragraph 5

What is divine love and what role does it play? How can we access this divine love and demonstrate it?

Paragraph 6

What are some examples from the life of Abdu'l Baha that illustrate the following qualities in relation to addressing racial prejudice or other injustices:

- Tact and wisdom
- Penetrating utterance

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- Indiscriminating fellowship
- Unfailing sympathy for the downtrodden
- Courage in conduct
- Perseverance in action
- Imperturbable in the face of tests
- Unwavering in His keen sense of justice

### **Selected Passages from Advent of Divine Justice**

“Let anyone inclined to either belittle the unique station conferred upon this community, or to question the role it will be called upon to play in the days to come, ponder the implication of these pregnant and highly illuminating words uttered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and addressed to it at a time when the fortunes of a world groaning beneath the burden of a devastating war had reached their lowest ebb. *“The continent of America,”* He so significantly wrote, *“is, in the eyes of the one true God, the land wherein the splendors of His light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled, where the righteous will abide, and the free assemble.”*

Already, the community of the believers of the North American continent—at once the prime mover and pattern of the future communities which the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh is destined to raise up throughout the length and breadth of the Western Hemisphere—has, despite the prevailing gloom, shown its capacity to be recognized as the torchbearer of that light, the repository of those mysteries, the exponent of that righteousness and the sanctuary of that freedom. To what other light can these above-quoted words possibly allude, if not to the light of the glory of the Golden Age of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh? What mysteries could ‘Abdu’l-Bahá have contemplated except the mysteries of that embryonic World Order now evolving within the matrix of His Administration? What righteousness if not the righteousness whose reign that Age and that Order can alone establish? What freedom but the freedom which the proclamation of His sovereignty in the fullness of time must bestow?

The community of the organized promoters of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh in the American continent—the spiritual descendants of the dawn-breakers of an heroic Age, who by their death proclaimed the birth of that Faith—must, in turn, usher in, not by their death but through living sacrifice, that promised World Order, the shell ordained to enshrine that priceless jewel, the world civilization, of which the Faith itself is the sole begetter. “

“To appraise correctly their value, and dilate on their merits and immediate consequences, is a task which only a future Bahá’í historian can properly discharge. I can only for the present place on record my profound conviction that a community capable of showing forth such deeds, of evincing such a spirit, of rising to such

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heights, cannot but be already possessed of such potentialities as will enable it to vindicate, in the fullness of time, its right to be acclaimed as the chief creator and champion of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Magnificent as has been this record, reminiscent as it is, in some of its aspects, of the exploits with which the dawn-breakers of an heroic Age have proclaimed the birth of the Faith itself, the task associated with the name of this privileged community is, far from approaching its climax, only beginning to unfold. What the American believers have, within the space of almost fifty years, achieved is infinitesimal when compared to the magnitude of the tasks ahead of them. The rumblings of that catastrophic upheaval, which is to proclaim, at one and the same time, the death-pangs of the old order and the birth-pangs of the new, indicate both the steady approach, as well as the awe-inspiring character, of those tasks."

**"As to racial prejudice**, the corrosion of which, for well-nigh a century, has bitten into the fiber, and attacked the whole social structure of American society, it should be regarded as constituting the most vital and challenging issue confronting the Bahá'í community at the present stage of its evolution. The ceaseless exertions which this issue of paramount importance calls for, the sacrifices it must impose, the care and vigilance it demands, the moral courage and fortitude it requires, the tact and sympathy it necessitates, invest this problem, which the American believers are still far from having satisfactorily resolved, with an urgency and importance that cannot be overestimated. White and Negro, high and low, young and old, whether newly converted to the Faith or not, all who stand identified with it must participate in, and lend their assistance, each according to his or her capacity, experience, and opportunities, to the common task of fulfilling the instructions, realizing the hopes, and following the example, of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

"Freedom from racial prejudice, in any of its forms, should, at such a time as this when an increasingly large section of the human race is falling a victim to its devastating ferocity, be adopted as the watchword of the entire body of the American believers, in whichever state they reside, in whatever circles they move, whatever their age, traditions, tastes, and habits. It should be consistently demonstrated in every phase of their activity and life, whether in the Bahá'í community or outside it, in public or in private, formally as well as informally, individually as well as in their official capacity as organized groups, committees and Assemblies. It should be deliberately cultivated through the various and everyday opportunities, no matter how insignificant, that present themselves, whether in their homes, their business offices, their schools and colleges, their

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social parties and recreation grounds, their Bahá'í meetings, conferences, conventions, summer schools and Assemblies. It should, above all else, become the keynote of the policy of that august body which, in its capacity as the national representative, and the director and coordinator of the affairs of the community, must set the example, and facilitate the application of such a vital principle to the lives and activities of those whose interests it safeguards and represents.”

“Dearly beloved friends! Though the task be long and arduous, yet the prize which the All-Bountiful Bestower has chosen to confer upon you is of such preciousness that neither tongue nor pen can befittingly appraise it. Though the goal towards which you are now so strenuously striving be distant, and as yet undisclosed to men's eyes, yet its promise lies firmly embedded in the authoritative and unalterable utterances of Bahá'u'lláh. Though the course He has traced for you seems, at times, lost in the threatening shadows with which a stricken humanity is now enveloped, yet the unfailing light He has caused to shine continually upon you is of such brightness that no earthly dusk can ever eclipse its splendor. Though small in numbers, and circumscribed as yet in your experiences, powers, and resources, yet the Force which energizes your mission is limitless in its range and incalculable in its potency. Though the enemies which every acceleration in the progress of your mission must raise up be fierce, numerous, and unrelenting, yet the invisible Hosts which, if you persevere, must, as promised, rush forth to your aid, will, in the end, enable you to vanquish their hopes and annihilate their forces. Though the ultimate blessings that must crown the consummation of your mission be undoubted, and the Divine promises given you firm and irrevocable, yet the measure of the goodly reward which every one of you is to reap must depend on the extent to which your daily exertions will have contributed to the expansion of that mission and the hastening of its triumph.”

**From the letter of the Universal House of Justice on the occasion of the dedication of the terraces on Mt. Carmel dated May 24, 2001**

“Reflection on what the Bahá'í community has accomplished throws into heartbreaking perspective the suffering and deprivation engulfing the great majority of our fellow human beings. It is necessary that it should do so, because the effect is to open our minds and souls to vital implications of the mission Bahá'u'lláh has laid on us. “Know thou of a truth,” He declares, “these great oppressions that have befallen the world are preparing it for the advent of the Most Great Justice.” “God be praised!” ‘Abdu'l-Bahá adds, “The sun of justice hath risen above the horizon of Bahá'u'lláh. For in His Tablets the foundations of such a justice have been laid as no mind hath, from the beginning of creation, conceived.” In the final analysis, it is this Divine purpose that all our activities are

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intended to serve, and we will advance this purpose to the degree that we understand what is at stake in the efforts we are making to teach the Faith, to establish and consolidate its institutions, and to intensify the influence it is exerting in the life of society.

Humanity's crying need will not be met by a struggle among competing ambitions or by protest against one or another of the countless wrongs afflicting a desperate age. It calls, rather, for a fundamental change of consciousness, for a wholehearted embrace of Bahá'u'lláh's teaching that the time has come when each human being on earth must learn to accept responsibility for the welfare of the entire human family. Commitment to this revolutionizing principle will increasingly empower individual believers and Bahá'í institutions alike in awakening others to the Day of God and to the latent spiritual and moral capacities that can change this world into another world. We demonstrate this commitment, Shoghi Effendi tells us, by our rectitude of conduct towards others, by the discipline of our own natures, and by our complete freedom from the prejudices that cripple collective action in the society around us and frustrate positive impulses towards change."